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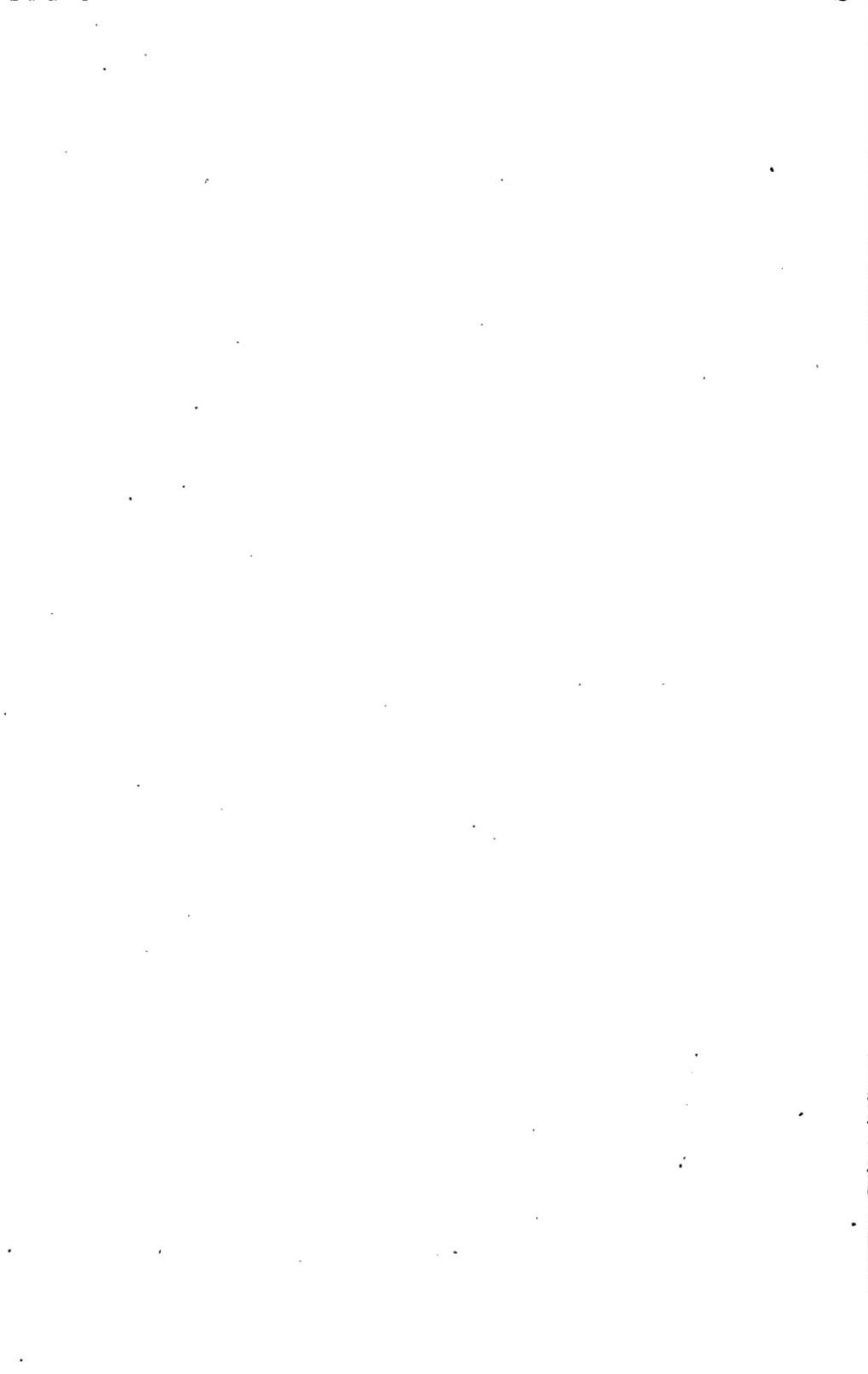
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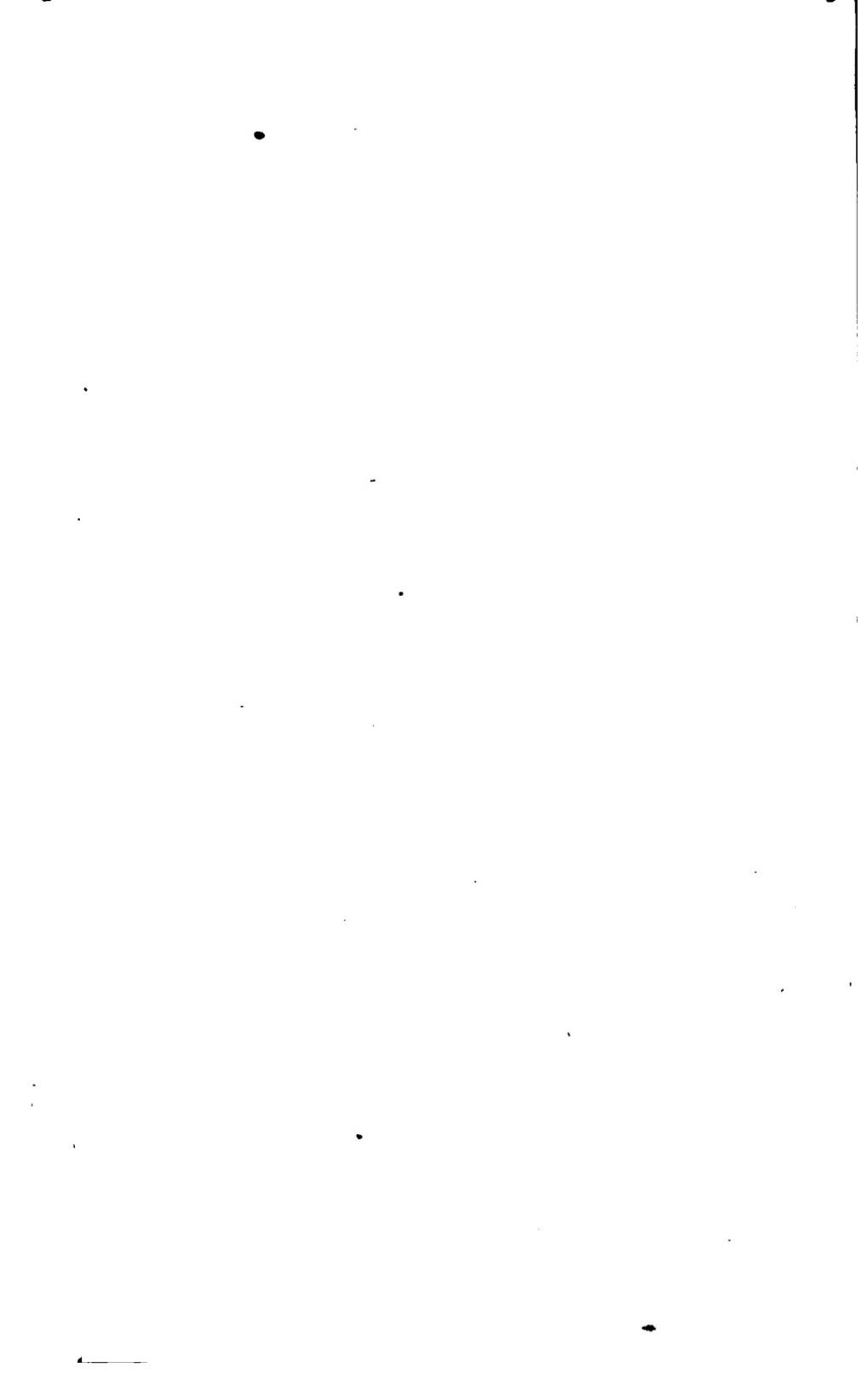
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# FIVE SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

BY THE

REV. WALTER FARQUHAR HOOK, M. A.

PREBENDARY OF LINCOLN,  
VICAR OF THE PARISH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, COVENTRY,  
AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY.



OXFORD: D. A. TALBOYS.

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AND H. C. LANGBRIDGE, BIRMINGHAM.

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TALBOYS AND BROWNE, PRINTERS, OXFORD.

**TO**

**THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD**

**JOHN**

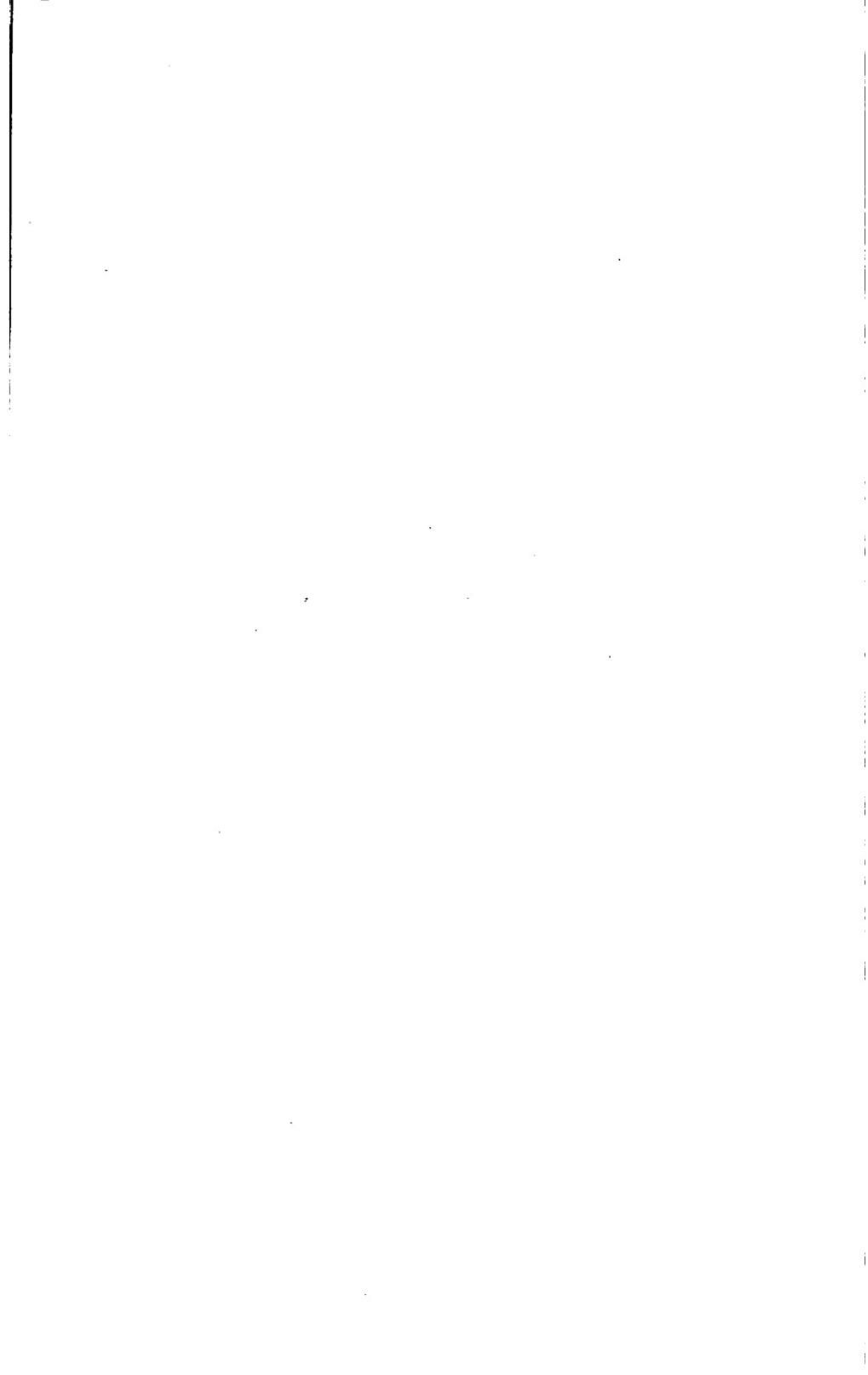
**BISHOP OF LINCOLN,**

**THESE PAGES**

**ARE MOST GRATEFULLY AND MOST DUTIFULLY**

**INSCRIBED.**

**M DCCC XXXVII.**



## CONTENTS.

---

### SERMON I.

#### PROMOTING THE GLORY OF GOD.

1 COR. X. 31.

PAGE

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.....	1
--	---

### SERMON II.

#### THE DUTY OF CONTENDING FOR THE TRUTH.

MATTHEW X. 34, 35, 36.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his Father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.....	25
---	----

### SERMON III.

#### ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

2 THESS. ii. 15.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle...	61
--	----

**SERMON IV.****TRADITION.***JEREMIAH vi. 16.*

	PAGE
Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. ....	93

**SERMON V.****THE STRAIT GATE.***MATT. vii., the 13th and three following verses.*

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in theret; because strait is the gate, and nar- row is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.....	119
---	-----

## SERMON I.

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I COR. X. 31.

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

CHRISTIANITY, like every other system, has its own end and object; and this end and object is identical with that for which the universe was formed—the promotion of the glory of God. For this the Father created the world, for this the Son redeemed the world, for this the Holy Ghost still abideth with the church to sanctify its members. Such is the unity of design which pervades the works of nature and the words of revelation, a unity of design which we should expect, *a priori*, when we remember that both proceed from the same divine source, the one and only God. And this, too, becomes the aim, the object, the design of every man, who, renewed and sanctified by the eternal Spirit, is a partaker of the divine nature—*his* ultimate end,

*his* peculiar work, *his χριστιάνικον ἔργον*, is not mere individual happiness, nor even the benefit of society, but that which is superior to these ends, because it comprehends them both, the promotion of the glory of God.

I say that this end comprehends the other two, because in what can the glory of the Creator, as Creator, consist, except in the perfection of the creature ? and in what does the perfection of the creature consist ? in what, but in fulfilling the purpose of his creation by implicit obedience to the will of the Creator ? *By breaking the law*, says the Apostle, *we dishonour God*<sup>1</sup>; and, therefore, by keeping the law we honour him. And it is because man in his fallen state is unable to keep the law, unable to render implicit obedience, unable to answer the end for which he was first formed in God's own image ; it is on this account that the human race is condemned. If, by a stretch of the imagination, we could conceive the heavenly bodies endued with reason and freedom of will, and the sun were to wander from the centre, the moon to refuse her light, and the spheres to neglect their wonted motions ; if, in short, they were, in some way or other, incapacitated for the various purposes for which

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ii. 23.

they were first commanded into being, we should at once conclude that, having become useless, they would be blotted out of existence. And, in like manner, we can understand how human nature had in itself sentence of annihilation from the moment it fell from its original state. Those offices, (no matter what they were, for we cannot fully comprehend their nature,) for the discharge of which such creatures as ourselves were formed, could no longer be discharged by us, and thenceforth the existence of our race became only a tolerated existence—an existence tolerated, through the mediation of the everlasting Son of God, in order that individuals might still escape from the destruction in which the race, *as such*, is involved. But we shall escape that destruction—how? only by being brought back to that divine nature which once belonged to our race, and by being thus enabled to render, through all eternity, that perfect obedience to the Creator which every creature restored to, or not fallen from, its original purity, must be prepared to pay. This was the great purpose of our Saviour's coming—not only by his sacrifice upon the cross to open heaven to all believers, but by his precious bloodshedding to purchase to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, that they might glorify God in

their bodies and in their spirits, which are God's. And if this absolute perfection is not to be achieved, until the body, raised in incorruption, shall be glorious as the renovated soul, and qualified to aid it in its sublimest flights, yet an approximation to this perfection is possible even in this world, such an approximation as receives in Scripture the name of perfection itself<sup>2</sup>.

Now—to return from this little digression to what we stated at the outset—it will not be doubted, that in bringing ourselves and others as near as possible to this perfection, we are advancing the real, the permanent, the everlasting happiness of mankind, individually and collectively. And therefore it is that, in the cherubical hymn, the church gives *thanks to our heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, for his great glory*, since, blessed be his holy name, his glory and our real happiness are so far identified that we cannot promote the one without advancing the other.

To trace this connexion between our own happiness and the divine glory is most important, since self-love, or a general regard to our own welfare, is a principle so deeply implanted in our nature, and so inseparably connected with

<sup>2</sup> See Lucas on Happiness, vol. ii. sect. 1.

it, that it would be urging an impossibility were we to exhort men to pursue as an ultimate end what we could not prove to be, at least, not inconsistent therewith. It is a principle of action to which the Scriptures themselves appeal, when they offer a heaven to our hopes and a hell to our fears. And, therefore, when addressing the babes in Christ, the young men of the Gospel; it is needful for us to shew the consistency between human happiness and divine glory. But the advanced Christian, the perfect man, the *τελεός*, as he was called of old, who is accustomed to converse with the unseen world, to contemplate the perfections of the Deity, to hold communion with the spirits of light, and to identify his cause with theirs, and the cause of creation with that of the Creator, *he* gradually merges the thought of self in the consciousness of being a fellow-worker with Omnipotence; and to him, consequently, the promotion of God's glory becomes indeed and in truth an ultimate end of action, an end sought for its own sake, and not for the sake of any thing else; by him God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven: And the merciful wisdom of appointing to man such an end as this will be at once apparent, when we come to consider, that, although self-love, that is to say, a desire for our

own welfare be, as we said before, a rational principle of action, a useful principle which leads to the restraint of those passions which we know will interfere with happiness; yet the vicious extreme, namely, selfishness, or an unconcern for the happiness of others whenever it interferes with our own passions or our supposed interests, is a sin of the most demoralizing character, for it may lead to the commission of almost any enormity to which we are strongly enticed. Benevolence is indeed co-ordinate with self-love, but to selfishness benevolence must ever be an antagonist principle. If (as is the case in most modern systems of ethics, not based on Scripture) a perpetual reference in all our actions is made to self; if we are bribed to benefit society by having it pointed out to us how particular interests are involved in the general welfare; if we accustom ourselves, whenever we reason on our conduct, to say, "I will abstain from this, or do that, because, though it occasion a temporary inconvenience, I see how it will tend to my eventual good;" if self be thus the centre round which our thoughts are taught to revolve; if self be thus enshrined as the god of our idolatry, is it not clear that we are acting upon a principle which must, sooner or later, terminate in the most cold and callous and narrow-minded

selfishness, which will effectually prevent our grovelling souls from ever rising to the performance of a generous act, or the formation of a disinterested wish? And therefore it is, that we are directed by Him, who, having made man's heart, must know what is best adapted to the exigencies of our nature—best calculated to give boldness, consistence, and dignity to human virtue, to keep self, as much as possible, out of view. He who takes for his guide the worldly philosopher, will ever be found to become more and more sordid as he advances in years. His generous impulses habitually checked, he will think that knowledge of the world consists in hardness of heart, and he will pass from this life to the next with feelings which can never be elevated to the love of God whom he hath not seen, because never exercised in the love of his brother whom he hath seen. Whereas, in the renovated heart of him who walks according to the Scriptures of truth, the principle of disinterested benevolence, such as angels feel for all the works of their great Creator's hands, will grow with his growth, and ripen for eternity. For the glory of his Saviour and his God he will be prepared to renounce the dearest enjoyments; his character will gradually assume an elevation which breathes of heaven, and after a life of

self-denial, he will be prepared to glorify God even in his death, if by attesting his faith through a martyr's death, he can strengthen those convictions, without which there will be no obedience.

And this brings me to remark, that although, strictly speaking, the glory of God is promoted only by the obedience of his creatures, yet, since men will never obey God, until they have learned to reverence, to fear, and to love him; whatever tends to represent him as an object of reverence, fear, and love, is said in Scripture to promote his glory. *I have glorified thee on earth,* says the Lord Jesus, in the 14th chapter of St. John, and he immediately adds how, *I have manifested thy name* or attributes, *to the men which thou gavest me out of the world*,—for a real faith in those attributes of justice and mercy combined, of awful justice refusing to pardon sin without the payment of its penalty, of ineffable mercy devising the means, while punishing sin, of sparing the sinner; a real faith in these attributes can scarcely fail to lead to sincere obedience. In like manner the Almighty is said to have manifested his glory, whenever, in any unwonted manner, he made a display of his properties and perfections. *These men,* he says, in the book of Numbers, *have seen*

*my glory*; meaning those wonders in the land of Egypt which proclaimed his almighty and protecting power. And for the glory of his holy name, that is, that his power and majesty might be known to the Gentiles, the Israelites were taught to ask his help, in their time of need. Without pursuing this subject further, enough has been said to shew what our specific, definite object must be, if we resolve to co-operate with all the uncorrupted works of our Maker's hands, in declaring the glory of God. While, as opportunity offers, we bring both others and ourselves to the obedience of the Gospel, we are indirectly to compass our end by lauding the name of Jehovah, and magnifying his word and his church, by declaring our conviction of his wisdom and goodness, and mercy and power, by manifesting in our conduct the reality of our faith and the power of his grace, and by evincing our reverence for all that is called by his name, or dedicated to his service: and whenever we perform any action, however trivial and indifferent in its own nature, with the view that God may be more known, more reverenced, loved, feared, admired, or adored, we are considered as acting upon the Christian principle, in seeking to promote the divine glory.

Of all the worthies whose praise is in the

Scriptures, whether of the Old Testament or the New, we shall find this to have been the characteristic virtue; but in none did it display itself more remarkably than in David. In the public exercise of his sovereign power, with perhaps the solitary exception of his numbering the people; his conduct was, on this point, unimpeachable; and hence he was worthy to be the model of all the future kings of Israel, and the type of Christ himself. Never did he ascribe his successes to his own right hand, or the strength of his own arm; and always, instead of being ashamed of the fact, as his successors too generally were, it was his glory to acknowledge himself, although the king of Israel, to be only the viceroy of Jehovah. Under the holy influence of this principle he descended from his throne to dance before the ark; he arranged all the services of the sanctuary according to the beauty of holiness; and he designed the erection of a temple which might declare to all the nations of the earth the devotion of himself and his people; and when prohibited from executing his design, he rejoiced to anticipate its completion by his son, and consoled himself by laying up in store for the holy work his hundred thousand talents of gold, and his thousand thousand talents of silver, his brass and iron

without weight, timber also and stone. Animated by his example, and guided by the counsels which David had been inspired to deliver, Solomon made the temple, what his father designed it to be, *so exceeding magnifical, that for its fame and its glory it was the joy of the whole earth.* Doubtless, in the age of Doeg and Shimei, there were not wanting cold calculating utilitarians, who, though dwelling in their houses of cedar, would be ready, nevertheless, to put the Judas question, to what purpose was this expenditure? and to suggest the distribution of the collected treasures of the pious sovereign among the poor. But their sophistry had no influence upon Solomon, the wisest of men: he made the temple what it was, all glorious without and within, that it might stand as a perpetual text preaching to the people, *Reverence my sanctuary*, and might tell it out among the heathen, that the Lord he was the God of that great nation which he had made to be a wise and understanding people: he knew that no expenditure is to be considered unprofitable, or wasteful, or useless, which, without violating the rules of honesty and justice, or causing the neglect of any immediate claim, tends to foster within us a holy fervour of feeling, and an ennobling elevation of sentiment, to interest us in

the cause of virtue and truth, to kindle in our souls that manly enthusiasm which is equally remote from the follies of affectation and the extravagance of fanaticism, or to testify our zeal for the service and honour of our God.

Such was the wisdom of the heart which actuated our own pious ancestors when they erected those minsters and cathedrals and magnificent churches, which adorn our several dioceses; these beautiful edifices by which we are ourselves surrounded. It was not for the mere purpose of daily worship, it was not as mere places of assembly that they made the shrines of the Redeemer to excel in grandeur the halls of justice or the regal palace; it was for the honour and glory of their God, to whom they consecrated their money or their labour, or their science or their art: it was for the glory of God that they endowed his church, and provided, not only for the instruction of the ignorant, but for the more solemn performance of our sacred offices in our larger sanctuaries. They thought, and they thought rightly, that the works of man ought to conspire with the works of nature, to make glorious the praise of him, by whom all things animate and inanimate were created. And for the glory of God they summoned the prelates of his church to sit as compeers with

the rulers of the state, and to sanctify, by their presence and advice, the national counsels ; for *they* never supposed that religion was a mere matter between an individual and his God ; they deemed it the duty of the state to proclaim to high and to low, to the stranger and to the native, to infidel nations as well as infidel men, that verily there is a God of nations ; verily there is a God in this his favoured land.

And sure I am it will *not* be for the glory of God, if we, in our wealth, permit those edifices to crumble into dust, which they reared in their poverty to the honour of his name : sure I am that it will *not* be for the glory of God, if we compel his ministers to prophesy in sackcloth; though thousands are, I trust, prepared to do so rather than sacrifice the particle of a principle : it will *not* be for the glory of God, if we silence the choirs which morning and evening offer up the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, not less for the commonwealth than for the comfort of individuals, or erase from our records all reference to his providence. I will only add, that it was for the glory of God, even to educate men of all professions for his service, that our forefathers established this famous University, and endowed our several colleges ; and woe were it to us, their degenerate offspring, if we

were to permit Ichabod to be inscribed on our once consecrated portals. Far otherwise will the true Christian act; in his eyes every thing will assume an air of importance, which, however remotely, has a tendency to evince our devotion, national or individual; and nothing will be considered unimportant, the doing or abstaining from which may be construed into a mark of irreverence or disrespect. Whether he eat, or whether he drink, or whatsoever he does, he will do all to the glory of God. On this principle it is, that the holy church descends in her rubrics to the minutest details, which her faithful children will love to observe, kneeling where they ought to kneel, and responding where they ought to respond; and on this principle it is, that her faithful minister will pay due regard to every ceremony, nor even array himself in the sacred vestment without a reverential feeling. In avoiding superstition we too often fall into the opposite extreme of irreverence. But we may depend upon it, that he is no true philosopher, I may add, no true Christian, who attends not to *little* things.

But, although the promotion of God's glory be the ultimate end of the Christian, it by no means follows that it must be always and immediately in view; although our *perpetual*, it can-

not be our *continual* object, for it implies the adoption of means, which, in process of time, must themselves, though subordinate and subsidiary, become ends. This is obviously the case, if the truth be admitted of what we stated at the outset, that the glory of the Creator consists in the perfection of the creature, and the perfection of the creature in fulfilling the purpose of his creation. For, on these grounds, man approximates to perfection in proportion as he acts in accordance with the constitution of his nature; and he acts according to the constitution of his nature, not by counteracting his internal principles, or by vainly attempting to eradicate his appetites, affections, and desires; but by preserving them in their right proportions and mutual relations; by bringing them into harmonious co-operation, and by reducing them all under the dominion of conscience, of reason, of revelation, and of grace. Man is a sensitive being, an intellectual being, and a moral being; and by his senses, his reason, and his conscience, properly regulated, he is to be impelled to immediate action. Thus the very fact of our constitution implies the occasional, and not unfrequent, quiescence of our leading principle, since these motives would cease to exist, unless resting on their respective objects

as ends in themselves. The very nature of a motive power would be changed by the interposition of some other object of contemplation, besides that to which it immediately impels us. We may go even further, and maintain that too close an attention to our ultimate design may sometimes actually lead to the frustration of our wishes. The honours of the University are not in store for the student who is always anticipating in his study the questions which may be put to him in the schools; but for him who, kindled into enthusiasm by the strains of the poet, set a-thinking by the reveries of the philosopher, and himself philosophizing on the facts of the historian, has made himself a general scholar; and yet it is the former who has had their common end the more constantly in view. And so, a too frequent reference and appeal to that which is the end of our Christian life, may make a man pedantic or fanatical without making him what a Christian ought to be. For the good Christian is not he who when he acts deliberately acts well, (this is the business of the beginner,) but he whose very impulses are good, who not only *chooses* but *prefers* what is right, whose virtue, without immediate reference to his principles, is so habitual as to appear as it were instinctive. *This* is the perfection at which

we are to aim; for this is the kind of perfection of which a spotless specimen was exhibited to us, when to die for our sins the Son of God became incarnate. That our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, from first to last, sought the promotion of his Father's glory, even if the assertions of Scripture were not unequivocal on the subject, it would be profanation to doubt. He sought not his own glory, but the glory of the Father which sent him. *Father, glorify thyself*, was his prayer, or if he prayed that his human nature might be endowed with a portion of that glory which, as the second Person of the Holy Trinity, he had possessed from all eternity, his petition was, *Father, glorify thy Son, that he may glorify thee*. But still he shewed us that our primary principles and affections are to act as the springs, the exciting causes, the impulses to immediate action. Although his miraculous powers were intended, in the first instance, as proofs of his mission, yet how often did pity and compassion lead him to the exercise of them. One while sympathy for the sorrows of those whom he had honoured with his friendship would water his eyes with precious tears; another while an holy indignation would rouse him to denounce the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, or to rebuke an unhallowed zeal in his follow-

ers. Now zeal for his Father's house would eat him up, and now discretion would induce him to avoid his enemies. Surely these things were written for our example, to convince us that it is no violation of the principle which must exist in every renovated heart, to pursue as subordinate ends those means to which we were first guided by that very principle. Let the desire of promoting God's glory determine us, among our other virtues, to cultivate especially a benevolent disposition; yet in pursuing the objects to which benevolence may excite us, not only our piety, but even our benevolence, may be lost sight of under the influence of a generous emotion. Let a wish to serve our Saviour, and to extend our sphere of usefulness, determine us to pursue our studies; yet in the prosecution of them the end will often be lost sight of, while our natural desire of knowledge prevails. The fact is, that when we dedicate our faculties to the service of God, though they receive a new direction, the faculties themselves remain as they were; and, consequently, when we are told to do all things for the glory of God, it is only intended that this end should influence us, as the worldly ends of worldly men influence them. When we call a man ambitious, or covetous, or studious, we attribute to him an end; but we

do not intend to say, that he never does anything but with a view to further his objects of ambition, or gain, or knowledge; what we do say is this, that he will never forego any favourable opportunity which may present itself of promoting the wish of his heart, nor ever enter on a *course* of action which is likely to interfere with his ultimate design; and therefore we can speculate with some degree of certainty on the line of conduct he will adopt in every important transaction. And so is it with the true Christian. Though not always the immediate *motive* of his actions, the promotion of God's glory will always be the *principle* by which his actions are regulated. All that is compatible with this end will be considered allowable, whatever is inconsistent therewith, however trivial it may appear, will be avoided. This will be the centre towards which all his lines of action tend, the point to which they gravitate, the latent energy which sets his wheels in motion. This will be the mainspring of his soul, the pulse of his heart. Although winds may be needful to impel us and waves to waft us on our way; though the eye be busied on the vessel we have to steer, and our attention directed to our fellow-voyagers; though our thoughts may sometimes turn with anxiety to the billows of a troubled world which

rage around us, yet this will be the star, the compass, by which we shall guide the helm, towards which often and at stated times we shall direct our looks, and contrary to which not a movement will be made. And thus doing, we shall eventually reach the haven of peace, an eternal one in the heavens.

And now, my brethren, it only remains to remark, that if we really and sincerely desire to promote the glory of our Lord, our Saviour, and our God, we must commence, if we have not commenced already, with ourselves. It is with our own hearts, with our own consciences, that we are in the first place and more immediately concerned. Denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and dedicating to the service of the Saviour who died to save us, our souls and bodies and spirits, our thoughts and purposes, words and actions, our hopes, fears, wishes, desires, interests and concerns, our primary and obvious duty is, by the assistance of that blessed Spirit, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, and to convey whose graces to the Christian soul, the sacraments and ordinances of the church, yea the church itself was instituted by Christ,—I say our primary and obvious duty is, by this divine assistance, to draw near unto perfection—to endeavour to stand perfect and complete in

all the will of God. And what though no human eye be on us ! There is no action so secret, no thought so profound, as to escape the observation of those celestial sanctities, the angels of light, who are encamped around the Christian warrior warring upon his passions, and who raise the hallelujah whenever he triumphs over his besetting constitutional sin. In all his heroic exercises of self-discipline, self-command, and self-improvement; in every step he takes in true grace and virtue ; in every advance in humility, and meekness, and temperance, and patience, and contempt of the world; in justice, in charity, in heavenly-mindedness, the Creator's glory is promoted by the rejoicings of the sympathizing hosts by whom his throne is surrounded, and who experience an accession of joy, even at one sinner's repentance.

But is this all ? No : though I am speaking in soberness a truth which the church has universally received and the Scriptures unequivocally declare,—let the cold and the careless say what they will,—a truth, on which the pious mind, in its meditative moments, delights to dwell,—(for *he* will never dive into the depths of the Christian system, who does not take into consideration its bearings, not upon man alone, but upon all the countless intelligences who

people infinite space,)—although I state a Christian verity, nevertheless it is quite impossible for any man to become a Christian in deed and in truth without promoting God's glory among the creatures of his own species. For where there is virtue within, it will be a shining as well as a burning light; and, what is more, the very Scriptures which proscribe vain-glory as a motive, command us expressly to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. We are enjoined not only to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, but to consider one another, to provoke, to excite, to stir up one another unto love and good works; not only to believe with the heart, but to confess with the mouth. And I mention this, the rather, since there are few sins into which the young, and especially the young of our own sex, are more prone to fall than into that mean and dastardly kind of hypocrisy which would make us appear to be less religious than we really are. Knowing their own weakness, young men are so fearful lest they should not always act up to their professions, and lest they should on that account be considered as hypocrites before their fellow-creatures, that they choose rather to become hypocrites before God; and thus they soon learn,

instead of raising their practice to their principles, to lower their principles to their practice. If there be any here present, in this congregation, to whom these remarks are applicable; and perchance there may be some, let them ponder deeply and seriously on this most awful sentence, a sentence rendered ten thousand fold more awful as coming from the mouth of Him who was love itself: *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.* And if Christ deny us, if he be ashamed of us, if he say unto us, *Depart from me, for I know ye not,* there is none other name under heaven whereby we can be saved: beside him there is no Saviour; and what will await us but eternal weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth?

Most heartily, then, do I pray, my brethren, whosoever you be, or whatever may be your destiny; whether you shall be called upon to take your hereditary station among the noble and the great, or whether you shall have precedence amid the ranks of the learned; whether you are to have your part in the disputationes of the senate or the bar; or whether you are to probe the mysteries of science; whether you are

to fill the most important of all offices, that of the student in divinity, elucidating the Scriptures and vindicating the ways of God to man; or whether yours shall be the happy lot of a parish priest, both in the privacy of domestic enjoyment and the busier scenes of active life,—most heartily do I pray that the spirit of our God may write on the fleshly tablets of your hearts, *there to be worn as a spiritual phylacter*y, this solemn injunction of the inspired Apostle, *Whether we eat, or whether we drink, or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God.*

## SERMON II.

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MATTHEW x. 34, 35, 36.

*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth.  
I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am  
come to set a man at variance against his Fa-  
ther, and the daughter against her mother, and  
the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;  
and a man's foes shall be they of his own house-  
hold.*

It is well known that the fact of which we have now read the prediction has often afforded to the infidel a subject for cavil, while, to the advocate of revelation it has not unfrequently been a source of perplexity. And a source of perplexity it must continue to be, so long as the Christian concedes what the infidel quietly assumes, that the immediate end of all religion is the promotion of peace upon earth. If the pro-

motion of peace upon earth be the immediate end of all religion, it is quite in vain to contend, that of all religions Christianity is the best. The opponent has only to refer to the revolutions occasioned in society by the first preaching of the Gospel, to the subsequent contentions of orthodox and heretic, to the crusades, to the consequences of the Reformation,—when strife, yet unappeased, was excited not only between the Papist and the Protestant, but between those whose object was merely to bring back to its primitive purity the church of their fathers, and those who established new sects, and, I might almost say, a new religion;—he has only to produce these facts, and, referring to the bitter controversies still raging around us, to demand where in the history of paganism a parallel can be found. I know that, to meet the objection, we are sometimes referred to the cases of Socrates and Aristotle; but of these instances the very most that can be made is, that there are on record two solitary exceptions to the general rule of universal toleration. And as to Ombos and Tentyra<sup>1</sup>, it is mere special pleading to quote the poetical exaggerations of Juvenal, when we can be met by the express asser-

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal, Satire xv.

tions of the Emperor Julian, who, in appealing to the Egyptians in favour of paganism, states it as a fact universally admitted, that an inter-community of gods was as prevalent among them as among the other nations<sup>2</sup>. Equally useless is it to refer, as some commentators do, to the severities practised by the heathens against the primo-primitive Christians. For here the Christians were the assailants, and the heathens only acted in self-defence. The Christians were persecuted, not because they declared that Jesus was the Son of God, but because they made war upon all other religions; because they persuaded and turned away much people, saying, *they be no gods which be made with hands*; because they denounced every thing that exalted itself, and was called a god, save Jehovah; because their first commandment was, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me;" because, as Quintilian expressly says, theirs was regarded as a superstition which was the bane of all other religions. Thus St. Polycarp was condemned, because, said the people, *he is a destroyer of our gods, who teacheth all men not to sacrifice or to worship them.* Thus, too, it was as an

<sup>2</sup> Ap. S. Cyril. cont. Julian. lib. v. See the whole subject discussed, *Divine Legation*, book ii. sect. 6.

enemy to the gods of Rome that St. Cyprian was beheaded. So also, because he refused to worship the great gods, the proto-martyr of our own Church, the illustrious St. Alban, was executed. "Who forbids you," said the Prefect Emilian to Dionysius of Alexandria, "to worship Jehovah also, if he be a God, together with them that be gods by nature<sup>3</sup>?" And why, asks Celsius<sup>4</sup>, may not we be permitted to worship angels, and heroes, and demons, if we will? Whether it be or be not a fact that Tiberius proposed to the senate to enrol the name of Jesus among the Gods of the empire; whether it be or be not a fact that Adrian designed to build a temple to his honour; whether it be or be not a fact, that Alexander Severus worshipped him in private together with his other deities, the circumstance that these stories could be circulated and believed is sufficient to shew that a compromise might have been made, and that a system which could regard with complacency the worship of different gods by six hundred nations<sup>5</sup>, would not have admitted an exception against

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, lib. vii. c. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Origen cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 378.

<sup>5</sup> "Six hundred nations," as Dionysius of Halicarnassus tells us, "had taken up their abode in Rome; and every one observed its own peculiar rites; and the Christians without

Christianity, if the professors of Christianity would have been contented with mere toleration, or if they would only have exercised a little liberality with respect to the religion of others; if they would have been satisfied with affirming, *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*; without adding the concluding portion of the sentence, which must always render our religion the detestation and abhorrence of all who reject its faith, *he who will not believe will be damned*. It was this,—this assertion of the guilt of original sin, and of the need of a Saviour, which caused them to be regarded (according to Tacitus<sup>6</sup>) as haters of the human race,—and as *such*, not as mere religionists, as the reputed enemies to the existing constitution of society; as persons prepared to turn the world upside down,—as a political party, they were ignorantly persecuted.

Now if these things be so, we can only effectually answer the opponent by denying what he takes for granted, that the promotion of

question might have enjoyed the same liberty, had they been content to enjoy it in silence; but they maintained, and that publicly, that all the deities of Greece and Rome were fictitious, and the adoration of them superstitious." Powell, Discourse X.

<sup>6</sup> Ann. xv. sect. 44.

peace upon earth is the *immediate* end and object which religion ought to have in view.

What, then, it is asked in a tone of surprise, derision, or anger, by those who, utterly ignorant of the first principles of Christianity, love to dogmatize on what they imagine to be its precepts? Is not God the author of peace and the lover of concord? Is not the Gospel the Gospel of peace, and Christ the Prince of peace? and are we not commanded to be peace-makers? Yes, God is the author of peace, of such peace as passeth the world's understanding, such as the world can neither give, nor, blessed be God, take away; that blessed peace of mind which, resulting from a consciousness of reconciliation with a once offended Father, in order to be understood must be experienced, for an angel's tongue would fail in describing it,—that holy, happy, heavenly peace of mind which has doubtless been shed abroad in the hearts of many of those who surround me, and than which I can wish no greater blessing to all who hear me. And to promote peace, harmony, and concord among their fellow-creatures, is an object, and a great object, with the Christian,—all that we say is, that it is not of necessity his *first*, his *immediate* object. As much as in him lies, that is, by patience, forbearance, and forgiveness

under circumstances of personal aggression and injury, he will live peaceably with all men, *if it be possible*; that is, if he can do so consistently with his allegiance to the cause of truth,—for the propagation of God's truth, *this* is his first, his immediate object.

At the expense of attention, meditation, time, study and prayer, the Christian is to buy the truth, and then, having obtained it, he is not only to hold it fast, but to assert it, and not only to assert it, but, if need shall be, earnestly to contend for it, to strive for it, to wrestle for it with those who attempt to pervert it. Unlike the ancient heathen and the modern latitudinarian, who ask with Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper? What is another man's religion to me? it is entirely between his own conscience and his God"—the Christian is instructed (so vast is the difference between Christian charity and worldly liberality) to look, *not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of another*; to consider others, and to provoke them to good works by the manifestation of the truth: if any man do err from the truth, we are not to leave him in his error as if it were no business of ours, but to endeavour to convert him, yea to reprove, rebuke, and exhort; and then, if he still refuse to turn from his errors, if

he cause divisions and offences contrary to the word we have heard, we are to mark and avoid him, not from ill-will, but for fear of confounding right with wrong, truth with error.

To the zeal displayed by the primitive Christians in propagating the truth, the whole truth, notwithstanding the persecutions in which it involved them, notwithstanding the charges brought against them of being movers of sedition, and of turning the world upside down, we have already alluded. And so extraordinary was the fact, that the heathen philosophers attributed it to the infatuation of obstinacy,—to a degree of contumacy which Pliny pronounced to be in itself worthy of death<sup>7</sup>.

And how nobly did our own ancestors act on

<sup>7</sup> Neque dubitabam *qualecumque* esset quod faterentur, certe *pertinaciam* et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri. Pliny, lib. x. Ep. 97. See also the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, lib. xi. sect. 3, where, after blessing the soul that is prepared to die, he adds, "but let this preparation arise from its own judgment, and not from mere obstinacy like that of the Christians." How utterly regardless of truth the best heathens were, may be seen in Whitby's note on Ephes. iv. 25, where he shews that even Plato admitted that "a man might lie, if he did so in a fit season." The answer which Christians gave to the accusation is thus expressed by Tertullian, *Illa ipsa obstinatio quam exprobratis, magistra est. Quis enim non contemplatione ejus concutitur ad requirendum quod intus in re sit.* *Apol.* c. 50.

this same principle, when, to use the words of Bishop Ridley, “ they preferred the antiquity of the primitive church to the novelty of the church of Rome.” Without attempting to vindicate every action of the reformers, who were men like ourselves, weak, fallible, and uninspired, we ought never to forget the deep debt we owe to them for the good fight they fought against popery, which they never would have fought unless they had been fully persuaded in their minds that of all Christian duties, the first is to contend for, yea even to die for, the truth. This zeal for the truth was the grand characteristic virtue of that age. And it is because it is *not* the characteristic virtue of our own age that the disputes of the Marian martyrs, when condemned to a common prison, are too often alluded to with a censure or a sneer. Whatever may be thought of the subject-matter of their dispute, (which related, however, not to doctrines since called Calvinistic, but to others bordering on the Pelagian heresy<sup>8</sup>,) their behaviour only shews how ineradicable was their devotion to the cause of truth, how precisely they felt, as Bishop Rid-

<sup>8</sup> That those with whom the orthodox disputed were Pelagians, is expressly asserted by Rowland Taylor. *Strype's Cranmer*, p. 958. See also Appendix, p. 195, and Annals, p. 207.

ley felt, and said, "As long as my breath is in my body I will never deny my Lord Christ, and his known truth." Let those, and only those, condemn them, who, when they argue, argue merely for victory, not as men valiant for the truth of God upon the earth, but as literary gladiators seeking to gratify their polemical vanity.

Our answer, then, to the adversary, is not by denying that Christianity has been productive of dissension, discord, and dispute, but by referring to our text to shew that the divine Author of our faith did not introduce into the world a new principle of action, did not for the first time establish a dogmatic theology, without clearly foreseeing the consequence of what he was doing, without being able to foretell the incidental and occasional evil, it could not fail to produce in a wicked world, without warning his followers, that although peace upon earth and good will among men was to be the *final* end, it would not always, or of necessity, be the *immediate* result of the preaching of the Gospel. If there be a revelation, the infidel will admit that the revealed religion must be the true one,—and if the true one, every modern infidel, not actually an atheist, will again admit that one of its articles must relate to the unity of the Godhead. But how will those who have gods many and lords many,

how will those who exercise their craft in making shrines for their idols, bear to hear this announced? When did the thief ever regard with complacency those who come with lanterns and torches to betray his lurking place? And how can we expect the sophist, whether philosopher or religionist, to receive with approbation those whose business it is to expose his lucrative errors and ambitious follies? How can the worker of iniquity do otherwise than hate a religion which, instead of applying an opiate to his conscience, declares the awful truth, that they who do as he is doing will have their portion hereafter where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? Will not the truth be hated by these, and such as these? If hated, will it not be opposed? If opposed, are not they who are bound to propagate obliged also to defend it? And when one party is eager to attack, and the other bound to defend, then comes the clash of human passions, and then begins that strife which when once begun, is as when one letteth out water. Therefore, so long as human nature remains as it now is, it cannot but be that of the advocacy of true religion, dissension must often be the result; and the ground of the controversy is then changed, and relates to the fact, whether or not a revelation was necessary, and has been

made—a subject on which it is unnecessary to enter.

As a stone, through an unresisting medium, would speed towards the centre, so, were it not for the passions of the wicked and the errors of the weak, the promulgation of Christianity and the promulgation of peace, would be synonymous terms; and it is dishonest to bring that as a charge against revelation which ought rather to be placed to the account of human depravity. On the contrary, when we look at the mighty changes for good which Christianity has already effected upon society, directly and indirectly, we shall anticipate with full confidence the blessings which will be then universal when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. We are to promote glory to God in the highest by propagating his truth without regard to consequences; and it is part of our faith to believe that peace upon earth and good will among men will follow *ultimately*, even *though* the immediate consequence be not peace, but a sword.

I would just pause, in passing, to observe, that if what has now been said be correct, we may see at once the error of that opinion which, since the time of Paley, has too generally prevailed; that if there is to be an established re-

igion, that religion ought to be the religion of the majority ; that we ought, in other words, to enquire, not what is the true religion, but what is the most popular. That in forming a new colony the established religion *will* be, most probably, the religion of the majority is not to be denied ; but why ? simply because with the majority there is power to establish it. But suppose by the law of the land, the constitution of the country, the endowments of our ancestors, the influence which the better educated among the people possess in the legislature, or by any other cause, the religion of the minority be (as is the case in Ireland at the present time) the religion established,—surely it is absurd to say that the minority is bound in this instance to give place to the majority. As in the former case, it was a question, not of right, but of might, so is it now, the minority, though fewer in number, being greater in power. And the simple question for them to decide is, whether their present position is the best they can take for the propagation of the truth among a deluded majority. If they think that by retaining the influence which the possession of property always gives, and by providing in every parish for the instruction of the people in the doctrines of truth, though the people, by refusing to hear

him, do for the present render the office of the minister thus appointed a sinecure,—if they think that by retaining all the advantages and privileges of an establishment, the cause of true religion will be furthered, then assuredly nothing but brute force ought to induce them to forego those advantages and privileges. If, on the other hand, any man think that by the retention of these privileges, the cause of truth will be retarded rather than advanced, however you may regret what may appear to be an error in judgment, you can have no right to blame him for pursuing with the same end in view a line of conduct different from your own. I say this that I may not seem to be trenching upon party politics, when, as a matter of general politics, which is part of religion, I venture to remind you on the authority of my text, that every Christian man, whether laic or cleric, magistrate or subject, is in duty bound in this and all like cases, to consider, not what is expedient at the moment for the sake of peace, but what is beneficial to the cause of truth. Expediency may be the idol of the heathen, but truth is still the guide of him who, on becoming a legislator or a magistrate, has not ceased to be a Christian.

But here we are met by the sneering sceptic, who, from the days of Pontius Pilate to the pre-

sent hour, has been accustomed to ask, “What *is* truth? It may be all very well to propagate the truth, but, after all, where *is* it to be found, and what *is* it? The Papist lays claim to it, and the ultra-Protestant lays claim to it, and both the Papist and the ultra-Protestant assert it to be what you of the Church of England refuse to admit. Why must they be wrong? and why must you, of necessity, be right?”

Now, my brethren, what does this very popular insinuation, that there is no such thing discoverable as religious truth, amount to? It amounts to nothing less than a virtual denial of the existence of revelation. I say that to insinuate that religious truth is not to be ascertained, is to insinuate that God has not revealed his will to man; and he who is guilty of the insinuation, be his professions what they may, is only an infidel in masquerade. If there be a revelation of God’s will and word, then it follows as a matter of course that in the record of that revelation religious truth is discoverable. Thus the Gospel is expressly declared by St. Paul to be the word of truth, for truth, as well as grace, came by Jesus Christ.

But, says the adversary, the question still recurs, because, among those who receive the Bible, disputes exist as to what the Bible really says.

It may be so. It is so. And the question, now, therefore is, whether this difference can be accounted for.

Now this is certain, that to any thing asserted by Scripture there cannot be two contrary meanings attached. All these differences, therefore, must be occasioned by some defect, not in the object contemplated, but in the persons contemplating it. Though the thing seen may be the same, it may be seen through a discolouring or distorting medium, or the eye seeing it may be diseased; when, therefore, there is some known wrong principle in the interpreter of Scripture, we are not to wonder, if, in some instances, the truth is hidden from his mental vision. Now that the mental eye, both of the Papist and of the ultra-Protestant, is jaundiced on those points where they differ from ourselves, appears from this, that both parties come to the interpretation of Scripture influenced by principles which they would not acknowledge as correct for the interpretation of any other ancient book.

The Papist first of all exalts tradition to an equality with Scripture, and then receives as tradition, not what is really such, that is, what has been received as such by the Catholic church; but what has at any time been decreed by that

branch of the church which is in slavery to the court of Rome. Thus the canons of the council of Trent are received as traditions. The Papist, therefore, interprets Scripture, not as we do, by the light of tradition, properly so called, by reference to the opinions and practices of the primitive ages, and by deference to the authority of the church Catholic, but according to certain dogmas of a comparatively modern date of the Roman church <sup>a</sup>.

The ultra-Protestant meets the Papist, though they start from the very opposite extremes. He *avowedly* puts aside the tradition which the Papist *only virtually* rejects. Instead of seeking to ascertain how the Scriptures were understood by those to whom they were in the first instance addressed, *how they were interpreted by the church universal before those divisions existed which we have now to deplore*, and when, therefore, (by means of corresponding churches and general

<sup>a</sup> See Waterland on Ecclesiastical Antiquity, chap. vii. Patrick on Tradition, p. 41. Stillingfleet's Rational Account, part I. chap. v. Marsh's Comparative View, p. 45. Beveridge on the Nineteenth Article, works ix. 393, and especially Jeremy Taylor's Dissuasive from Popery, x. 485. Bellarmine, Tract. de Potest. Sum. Pontif., plainly declares "that the modern church of Rome has power not only to declare and explain, but even to constitute and command what shall belong to the faith."

councils,) the opinion of the universal church could be known, he relies entirely on his private judgment; and thus, while rejecting with indignation and scorn the claim to infallibility made by the Pope of Rome, he, in effect, converts every individual teacher, either into an infallible pope, or into a mere sceptic. I do not deny the right of private judgment as a political privilege, but to contend for it, as some persons do, as a sure guide to truth, is not only absurd, but cannot fail to involve those who do so in inconsistency as well as error.

We see, then, why these parties are not able to discover the truth, although the Bible *may be* open before them; there is always something intervening to prevent them from seeing the truth clearly; and we all know how very small a substance held close to the eye will eclipse the sun at its zenith. I wish not to throw blame upon them. Whether the dimness or obliquity of their vision be a misfortune or a fault, or rather, *when* it is the one or the other, it is not for us to determine who are forbidden to judge, it can be known by Him only to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid. The object, in alluding to the subject now, is simply to shew that *their* having missed the truth is no proof that the truth is not discover-

able by those who (to adopt the words of one to whom this church is much indebted, Archbishop Cranmer) "follow the judgment of the most sacred word of God, *and* of the holy Catholic church."

Nor is the discovery of the truth, though requiring much attention and study, so difficult as those who would deter us from seeking it are fond to represent. The chief difficulty relates to the formation of our principles. And here the church stands towards us in the same relation as the Apostles did towards the primitive Christians. She dogmatizes on certain articles of faith, and then requires us to act as the Bereans did after the preaching of the Apostle, to search the Scriptures, and to ascertain for ourselves whether what she says can be read therein, or proved thereby. Thus, with respect to our principles, we are to prove all things. But, having proved them, and found them to be good, we are to hold them fast, and to use them as a balance in which to weigh every theory which may afterwards be suggested; a measure by which to ascertain the height and length and breadth of every other doctrine that may be advanced. Although we may not be able to detect the fallacy of every paralogism that may be brought under our notice, yet, since it is no

proof that an argument is correct, because I, as an individual, cannot refute it, we are justified in rejecting it at once, if it be adduced in opposition to some conclusion, of the truth of which we have been previously convinced. Being convinced of the fact that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, we are ready to admit that it would be mere waste of time to attend to any argument which should have for its object to prove the contrary. And in like manner, having ascertained that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as stated and guarded in the Athanasian creed, that bulwark to the Apostles' creed, is the doctrine of Scripture, we are not called upon (except as scholars endeavouring to convince gainsayers) to examine the statements of every heretic who may think fit to deny or explain away this article of faith. To many persons this would, indeed, be worse than a waste of time, for, intellectually as well as morally, we are in a state of probation. And if it would be infatuation in any one to say, "being fully persuaded of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the power of divine grace for my protection, I will frequent the society of the profligate and profane, in order to *prove* the virtue, which, without trial, can hardly be said to exist;"—if this would be infatuation, folly, and

madness, scarcely one whit less absurd is the reasoning of him who, in order to strengthen his convictions, revels in the writings of heresy, and disports himself in the gainsaying of Core. It is in fact tempting God ; it is like casting oneself down from the pinnacle of the temple, to see if the angels will bear us up ; it is placing ourselves wilfully in those very circumstances of temptation into which we daily pray that we may not be led,—for a fool, recollect, may often have sagacity to start a question which the wisest of men may not have sagacity to resolve. It is enough for us to know that opinions contrary to each other cannot both be true ; and therefore, if, of the truth of our own opinions on any given subject, we are (after due and diligent examination and prayer) morally certain, we are justified in rejecting (even without examination) arguments brought forward for the support of opinions at variance with them. This the world will call prejudice. But, my brethren, what the world calls prejudice is often and generally that resolute adherence to principle which, in the primitive Christians, was regarded as obstinacy, and, wanting which, a man becomes variable as the wind, fluctuating as the wave of the sea, changeable as the face of the earth, uncertain as the contingencies of futurity, always in motion

without ever making progress, ever learning, but never coming, to the knowledge of the truth. But to dwell longer upon this part of our subject is unnecessary, since, whether the sceptic think that truth be discoverable or not, he will never be able to silence the Christian whose duty it is to propagate what he believes to be such.

The chief object in selecting the present subject for my discourse is to call attention to a great principle of Christian conduct, which, in the present age, is, I fear, less influential than it ought to be among the members of the church in this nation.

Having experienced for a long period that greatest of all great blessings, peace and quietness, we are too apt (forgetful of our text) to consider the preservation of peace to be the first of all virtues, for the sake of which scarcely any sacrifice or concession is too great. That I am justified in saying this, a very little consideration will serve to shew. When the character of a minister of the Gospel comes under discussion, what, in nine cases out of ten, is the first question asked? Is it whether he faithfully declares the whole counsel of God, as it relates both to discipline and doctrine, fearless of consequences and regardless of persons? Is it, whether, faithful to his ordination oath, he is ready to banish and

drive away all erroneous, as well as strange, doctrines?—Is it not rather, whether he is popular—whether he is liked—whether he is doing good to the establishment by filling the church, although perhaps his method of filling the church is merely by preaching more skilfully than the dissenting teacher, the erroneous and strange doctrines of the meeting-house? So again, in all the various and inconsistent, and sometimes most ridiculous, measures suggested on the subject of church reform, What is too generally the object proposed? Is it a fair and candid examination of the question, whether the truth be with us or not, in order that it may be more carefully guarded,—whether we have retained in our services all the old usages that we ought to have retained,—whether there be any portion of the godly discipline of the primitive church, which our ancestors wished, but were unable, to restore three centuries ago, that can be restored now? No, the question invariably is, as to what portions of the truth may be given up, what portions of the little discipline still left us, relaxed, in order to conciliate dissenters, and to bring within the pale those who, not influenced by church principles, would soon cause us to deviate more and more from the truth. I pray that those who so act may not be more influ-

enced by a desire to save the emoluments of an establishment, than to uphold the church of Christ in its integrity! Again,—when our support is asked for religious and charitable institutions or societies, the only thing thought of, in too many instances, is the object; if the object be a specious one, the means for its accomplishment are disregarded, though the means adopted may, by implication, involve principles of the first importance; and although by associating with dissenters, we may pay a compliment to schism, at the expense of truth. Far different were the feelings of good Bishop Ridgley, when standing on this very spot he refused to move even his cap to the representatives of the pope of Rome, lest, as he himself said, he should be thought to do it in derogation to the verity of God's word.

I know that it will be said in reply, that some truths are essential and some non-essential; and that while no inducement ought to prevail upon us to sacrifice the former, with respect to the latter we may use our discretion. But here we may ask, Who is to decide what is essential or not? A line must be drawn somewhere;—who shall decide where the line shall be? One person tells that all the Gospel consists in the one doctrine of justification by faith, and this doc-

One received all doctrines not immediately connected with it, are, in his opinion, non-essential; another tells us, that the only real essential is morality; and thus each draws his line so as to admit those with whom he wishes to associate; while each party unites in the condemnation of all who are zealous for the whole counsel of God. It is a fact that in the history of the church there is scarcely any doctrine of our religion which has not at one time or other been represented as non-essential by some or other party. Admit this principle, and there is no limit to the self-deception it will occasion. Assuming that on non-essential truths it is unnecessary to insist, the careless, indolent self-deceiver will soon place in this category all those truths which, not accordant with the spirit of the age, it may be unpopular or inconvenient to maintain; or which are contrary to his interests, his passions, his self-indulgence, or his pride. If we are to make a distinction between essential and non-essential truths, between what relates *ad fidem Catholicam*, and what merely pertains *ad scientiam theologicam*, we must refer for that distinction not to our own private judgment, but to the opinion of the church; though it is scarcely possible to conceive how any portions of the truth can be sacrificed without injury to

the edifice of which they form the component parts.

To this worldly spirit of preferring peace to truth, instead of truth to peace, may be traced, the advice so frequently given to the young, to avoid the consideration of controverted topics, and instead of employing themselves with a single eye in the discovery of the truth, to look out for points upon which they can agree with others ;—advice, which, if taken literally, is absurd, (for what doctrine is there, not excepting that which relates to the existence of the Deity, which has not at some time or other been controverted ?) and of which the wisdom may be fairly questioned, if it be intended to refer to those doctrines concerning which disputes are rife at the present time. For these seem to be the very topics to which attention ought to be principally directed. Upon points on which all parties standing within the same line as ourselves are agreed, there is no great difficulty in making up the mind ; since the mind, by a kind of *vis inertiae*, inclines to acquiesce in the decisions of the majority. The difficulty, and the temptation to error, is with respect to doctrines of which the discussion is unpopular ; and, therefore, I say, reason shews that on these should be expended, if not our first, our greatest labours.

It is in defence of those portions of the truth against which the enemy of all truth directs his attack at the present time, that we are to put on our spiritual armour. This is the work marked out by Providence for us,—this is the work that *our* hand findeth to do,—these are the erroneous and strange doctrines, which we, of the clergy, are sworn to use our diligence to banish and drive away,—not, of course, the erroneous and strange doctrines which sleep in the grave with those who started them; but the erroneous and strange doctrines now in existence. If men, in their zeal for the truth, were to forget to interweave therewith a love of peace, when, without sacrifice of truth, peace could be obtained; then against that error it would be our duty to contend with all the earnestness of a Taylor or a Stillingfleet; but on these very same grounds, now that, in their love of peace, they would fain quench all zeal for truth, our business is, to sound the trumpet in Zion, and summon our sleeping Israel to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

I am well aware that the principle now advocated is a torch at which all parties may light their fires,—a sword with a double edge. And I not only admit, but contend, that in order to be consistent we must never blame the dissenter,

whether popish or protestant, for contending against us, if they think us to be in error. So far from regarding the discussions which may arise from our differences, with an evil eye, I would rather consider them as St. Augustin considered the controversies which heretics started in his days, as the providential means for stirring up our zeal for the truth, and even for bringing parts of the truth which might otherwise have been overlooked more prominently forward<sup>1</sup>. "Contrary blasts of doctrine," as Lord Bacon says, "do sift and winnow men's faith." All that we demand of our adversaries is, (what they may demand of us in return,) that they conduct their controversies with courtesy and candour, and with that Christian charity, without which, though they speak with the tongues of men and angels, they are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

And here it is—in this proviso, that all things must be done in charity—that we find an answer

<sup>1</sup> *Multa quippe ad fidem Catholicam pertinentia, dum Hæreticorum calidâ inquietudine agitantur, ut adversus eos defendi possint, et considerantur diligentius, et intelliguntur clarius et instantius prædicantur: et ab adversario mota quæstio discendi existit occasio.* *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xvi. 2. This seems to have been a favourite opinion with St. Augustin, as he repeats it often. See *De Vera Relig.* c. 6. n. 10, and *De Dono Persever.*, c. 20. n. 23. tom. x.

to the sceptic, when, in order to deter men from acting on this principle, he refers to the horrors of the inquisition, the atrocities of Queen Mary's reign, and the massacres of St. Bartholomew's day. In attributing in these and the like instances the conduct of the persecutors to their zeal for the truth, he assumes the very fact which we call upon him to prove. If, in their characters, we can discover unequivocal symptoms of wrath, fierceness, animosity, contentiousness, violence, hatred, envyings, pride, avarice, ambition, why are we to attribute their evil deeds, not to these bad passions, but to the one good principle they professed, and professed, we may shrewdly suspect, with hypocrisy, since the same holy religion which calls on us to be zealous for the truth denounces in terms the most awful, the deeds of which they were guilty, and the passions in which they indulged? But admitting that in some instances,—for example, in that of Sir Thomas More, and in that of Archbishop Cranmer, this principle has been actually not only the pretext, but the cause of actions which we now universally regard with abhorrence,—are we to condemn a principle because in a revolutionary period it happened to be misapplied?—if so, what principle of action is there that can abide the test? We might just as consistently

accuse iron of murder, wine of drunkenness; strength of cruelty, courage of fool-hardiness; we might as reasonably condemn justice and disparage physic, because some men have been wronged in courts of law, and others poisoned by their physicians.

In all these instances the fault was not in the principle which was given by God, but in its application, which was made by man—not in the object aimed at, but in the means and measures adopted for its execution. How far the conduct of the persecutors of the sixteenth century, (whether popish or protestant,) in seeking to promote what they may have thought to be the cause of truth by iniquitous means, can be palliated by the ignorance which (owing to there not having been any controversy on the subject) prevailed, it is not for us to surmise. To their own master they must stand or fall. That their proceedings were contrary to the principle of our church, even before the era of the Reformation, is evident, from the fact that the persecutors consigned their victims for execution to the civil power,—no canon being found to authorize their bloody-mindedness; that they were contrary to the principle of the church Catholic might be proved by numberless citations from the Fathers, especially from Tertullian, Lactan-

tius, and St. Athanasius, wherein they expressly declare that it is the property of religion not to compel, but to persuade<sup>2</sup>. And I need scarcely stay to shew that they were contrary to the whole spirit of the holy Scriptures, which, if they command us to speak the truth, still command us to speak it in love,—if to instruct those who oppose themselves, to instruct them in meekness—to be gentle to all men; we may rebuke, but we may not hate our brother; we may admonish, but not count him as an enemy. A Christian is expressly prohibited from being a striker: the weapons of his warfare may not be carnal; and if he is to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, it is to be by well-doing.

If we bear these things in mind, if we are always careful not to do evil that good may

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, ad Scap., cap. 2. *Nec religionis est cogere religionem quæ sponte suscipi debet, non vi.* Lactantius, Instit., lib. v. c. 19. Athanasius, Hist. Arian ad Monach., c. 33; p. 363 and 384. In Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophecy*, chap. i. sect. 14., several other fathers are referred to, and others are quoted by the Archbishop of Spalato, lib. viii. de Rep. Eccl., c. 8. St. Chrysost. Homil. iv., in verba Isaiae, vidi Dominum, etc., vol. iii. p. 872 and 873, and Homil. i. in Tit. vol. ult., p. 625. St. Jerome, Epitaph. Nepotiani, cap. vii. Speaking of the persecution of the Macedonians by Theodosius, bishop of Synada, Socrates expressly says, *Kαὶ τοῦτο ἐποιεῖ, οὐκ εἴωθος διώκειν τὴν δρθιδόξην ἐκπηγίαν.* Lib. vii. c. 5.

come, and never forget that though the truth is to be propagated, it is only to be propagated by lawful and canonical means and measures, we shall not deviate into any vicious extreme, with respect to this principle of action ; and while we differ from the worldly politician in that when peace and truth are incompatible, *he* would sacrifice truth for the sake of peace, *we* peace for the sake of truth,—we shall differ from him still more widely, when circumstances occur of a personal nature. His liberality, indeed, is marvellous, his concessions prodigious, his tenderness for weak consciences almost painful, when the question before him relates only to God's truth. But how is it when his own word is doubted—when his own honour is impeached ? Then nothing will suffice but an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth,—the aspersion cannot be wiped out, nor the injury effaced, until he has confronted his enemy, prepared to risk the awful alternative of being either a suicide or a murderer. How is it again when his property is endangered—his liberty threatened—his party defeated ? then where is all this forbearance—this love of concord—this liberality—this vehement desire to preserve at all hazards the peace of society ? Alas ! how many a worldly politician there is, who thinks scorn of a poor Chris-

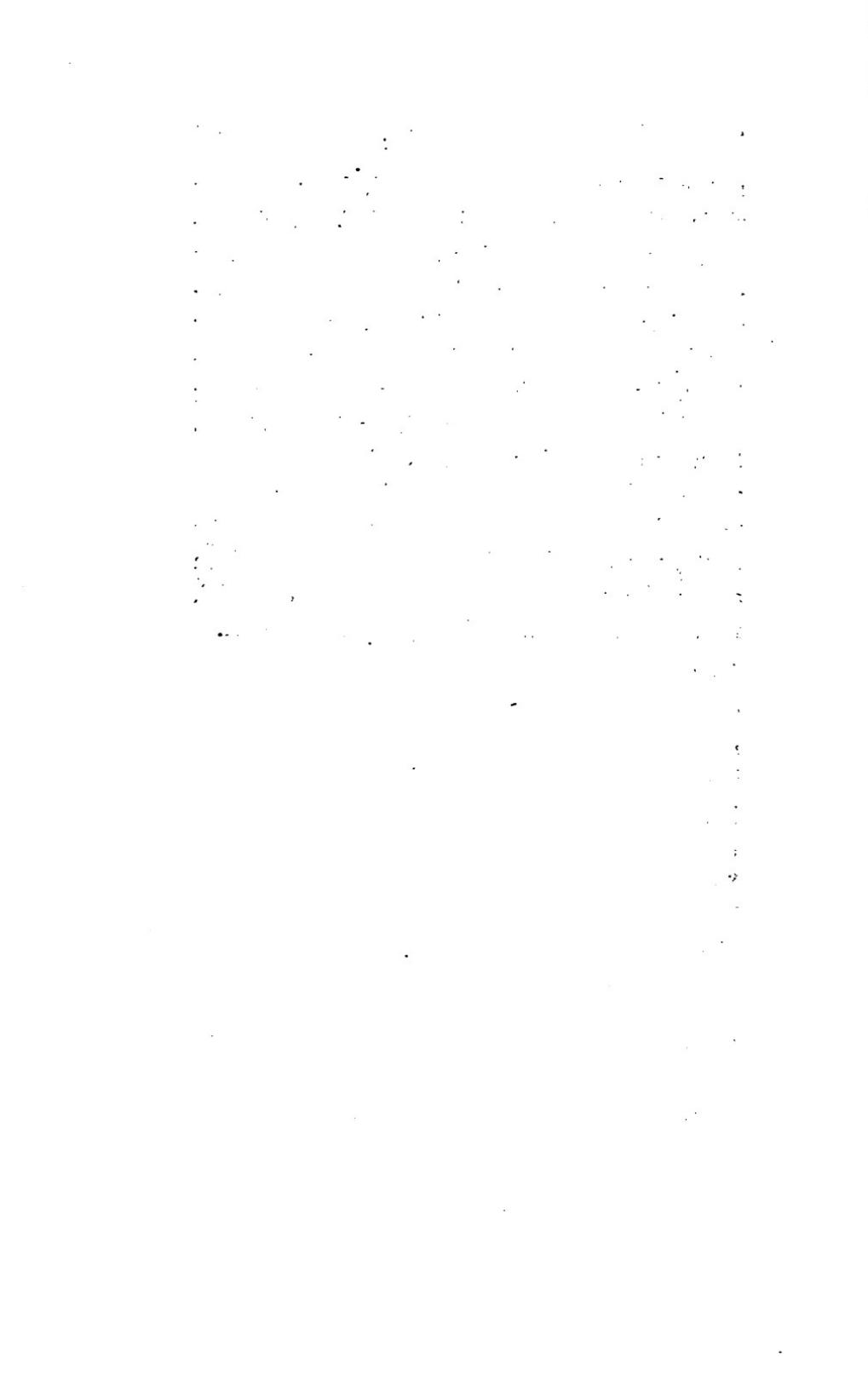
tian if his zeal for the truth ever strike from him a hasty spark of anger, who to serve his selfish purposes or to gratify his thirst of vengeance would not care if he involved the whole world in bloodshed and ruin !

May the everlasting Spirit of the Father descend into our hearts, my brethren, that through his sanctifying influence our conduct may be the very reverse of this.

May no hope, no fear, no pleasure, no pain, no external force, no weakness from within, no den of lions, no fiery furnace, no cruel mockings, no moral persecution worse to bear than corporal pangs, not the censure of the proud nor the arguments of the subtle, not the contemptuous insolence of the arrogant nor the sarcastic malevolence of the sneerer, deter us from asserting, in season and out of season, the whole counsel of God as it has come down to us from the Apostles through that blessed church which has been watered by the blood of our martyred forefathers,—no, not though the consequence be loss of peace and spoiling of goods; no, not though the consequence be death to ourselves and destruction, so far as this world is concerned, to all that we hold dearer than life;—but, if we can conciliate friend or foe by forbearing injuries, forgiving insults, overpaying benefits, may we

shew by so doing that, though like St. John, the tenderest of the Apostles, we can become for the cause of truth sons of thunder, yet like him, too, we can humbly endeavour to tread in our divine Master's steps, who for our sakes gave his cheek to the smiter, and has bequeathed to us his commandment that we should not avenge ourselves. It is thus that we must prove to the world that our zeal for the truth is the result not of a tyrannical temper, impatient of opposition, of a disputatious mind, or an uncharitable spleen; but of that genuine Christian charity to which the worldling loves tauntingly to refer, whilst its real character and nature are to him as colours to the blind, or as melody to the deaf; for Christian charity is not that careless indifference which countenances vice by palliating error; it is not mere good nature, nor a romantic undisciplined sentimentality; above all, it is not that selfishness which, disguised under the name of liberality, makes a man the flatterer, the sycophant, the parasite of the world, by concealing unwelcome truths, however wholesome. No, Christian charity is a sublime and steady principle which, regardless of individual interest or ease, resulting from faith in the promises and zeal for the laws of God, undeterred by evil report and unseduced by good report, seeks the welfare of mankind.

not only temporal but eternal, by punishing their crimes as well as by alleviating their distresses and sympathizing with their sorrows, by exposing the sophistry of error as well as by inculcating the doctrines of truth, by unmasking the hypocrite as well as by rewarding the righteous, by combatting the low and grovelling principles of low and grovelling minds, not less than by maintaining all those high, honourable, and ennobling sympathies and sentiments, the possession of which distinguishes man from the brute, the exercise of which exalts the citizen above the savage, the sanctification of which raises the Christian to the dignity of an angel.



## SERMON III.

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2 THESS. ii. 15.

*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

IN addressing you on a former occasion, I ventured to protest against that system of compromise, which, from the days of Ammonius Saccas to the present hour, has always been popular among those religionists who prefer peace to truth, instead of truth to peace; but which, perhaps, never prevailed among men really serious in their views, and honest in their intentions, to the extent it does now. To sacrifice any portion of any known truth, or, which comes to nearly the same thing, to forbear from the expression of it, from any sordid care or debasing fear, in order to promote peace among ourselves, or to offer a more imposing front to

the enemy, to increase our political strength, or to ward off impending persecution; to silence an adversary, or to save the advantages and honours of an establishment;—in a word, for any cause, pretext, or purpose whatever, is to act on a principle just the reverse of that which won for the primitive martyrs their crown of glory, and enabled our own forefathers to hand down to us the church in which it is our privilege to eat the bread of life. Suppose that our forefathers, those to whom God in his providential mercy committed the custody of his church, influenced by a different principle, had acted on a different system, and, instead of maintaining resolutely and firmly, as (peace be to their ashes) they did, the whole counsel of God, had from time to time sacrificed, for the sake of peace, here a little and there a little of what some of their contemporaries, relying on their own private judgment, were pleased to consider non-essential points;—suppose this to have been the case, and what would our position be at the present moment? Of the torn and tattered vesture of our Saviour what should we have left? With our clergy, if clergy they might still be called, stripped of all those decent adornments of office which at one time excited the spleen of the captious and the fury of the superstitious;

with our sanctuaries bare of ornament as the desecrated barn of the lay-impropriator; what would have become, by this time, of our venerable ritual, our primitive liturgy, and all those other divine offices by which our souls are attuned for heaven, and brought into communion with the saints of the church triumphant, through the self-same services by which those saints themselves, through a long succession of ages, sought for and obtained sanctification, solace, and strength, while they were militant on earth? Long since they would have all been sacrificed to conciliate those who preferred the muddy waters of Geneva to the pure fountains of catholic antiquity. Where would have been that ministry which we now trace up to the Apostles, and through the Apostles to Christ? Long since, it would have been levelled to the dust, to make way for the Presbyterian platform. To conciliate the Zuinglians the canon of the communion would have been altered, and to please anabaptists our children would have remained unbaptized. And our Articles,—what would have become of them?—They would have yielded to other Articles breathing all the horrors of an unmitigated Calvinism, unless these, too, had in their turn given way, in the last century, to an Arian creed, to gratify those who

contended, that, in maintaining the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, we were narrowing the pale unnecessarily, and contending for a mere iota. Such at least would have been the case with the majority of those who are now members of the church of this land. Some few there might have been, there *would* have been, a chosen few, who, refusing to bow the knee to Baal, or to worship the golden image of worldly expedience, though a burning fiery furnace blazed before it, would have kept up in dens and caverns and upper rooms, amid contempt and scorn and persecution, the apostolical succession of the ministry, while they would have soothed their sufferings and sorrows by the calm but sublime and elevating devotions of the Liturgy;—and of these, preserved “as a cluster of the vintage, as a candle in a dark place, as a haven or ship from the tempest,”—of these the successors perhaps would be now beginning to creep out of their obscurity, and to win to their side, like the episcopalians of Scotland, the more soberminded and better educated of their countrymen. But if it *were* so, it would not be in the churches once their own; it would be amid the difficulties of a bare toleration, not with the aids and appliances by which an establishment influences public opinion,—it would not be in these ancient

seats of learning, but in private seminaries, where the learning which is acquired, if it be more meritorious to the individual, is less beneficial to the public. How vast, then, is the debt of gratitude which we owe to our Parkers, our Bancrofts, our Sheldons, who bravely dared the execrations of their own age,—execrations, of which the cuckoo cry is still iterated by our popular historians,—in order that they might hand down to us those doctrines and institutions and sacred offices, and that primitive and apostolical discipline, of which men are beginning to understand and acknowledge the value. How gratefully ought we to recognize the guiding hand of Providence, which, in spite of the erastianism of some, and the puritanism of others, the Calvinism of one party, and the Arminianism of another; the desire on the one side to conciliate popish, and on the other to amalgamate with protestant dissenters, has preserved to us in this land, unworthy as we are, the holy catholic church<sup>1</sup>,—which, when at the Revolu-

<sup>1</sup>“Although the word *catholic* properly signifies universal, they (the ancient Fathers) used it in the same sense that we do *orthodox*, as opposed to heretic, calling an orthodox man a *catholic*.” *Bp. Beveridge*, ii. 197. Horne’s edit. Thus it was said by Pacian, *Christianus mihi nomen, Catholicus cognomen*: by the former I am distinguished from the *heathen*, by the latter from the *heretic*. In confirmation of this,

tion Latitudinarianism was in the ascendant, and was levelling a fatal blow at our orthodoxy of

the following passage from Suicer may be adduced: Καθολικοὶ, *catholici*, si ad ipsa vocis hujus incunabula, et antiquissimum ascendamus usum, vocantur *Christiani orthodoxi*, atque ita discernuntur a Christianis hæreticis. Patet hoc ex cod. lib. i. tit. 1. Justin. de summa Trin. et fide Cathol. Sunt igitur Christiani quidam, qui non sunt *catholici*, quales hæretici. B. Augustinus, in Psalm-lxvii., and afterwards he remarks, *Quævis ecclesia particularis*, siquidem orthodoxa est, vocatur καθολική. Ita ecclesia Alexandrina appellatur *catholicæ*. Apud Athanasium est inscriptio epistolæ, tom. i. p. 779. Κωνσταντῖνος, μέγας, σεβαστὸς, τῷ λαῷ τῷ κατὰ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας. Constantinus Maximus, Augustus, populo catholicæ ecclesiæ Alexandrinae. *Suicer. Thesaurus*, vol. ii. p. 14, where other authorities are cited. But it is here necessary, in order to understand the full meaning of the word, to remember who were considered heretics; and for answer we may refer to the sixth canon of the council of Constantinople, one of the councils to which the church of England directs us to refer in our judgment of heresy; where it is said, "We call them heretics who have formerly been abdicated by the church, and afterwards anathematized by us; and further, *them who profess a sound faith, but have made a schism, and gathered congregations in opposition to the canonical bishops.*" Thus the Novatians, who were both Trinitarians and Episcopilians, were *not* considered catholics, and were regarded as heretics, because they were opposed to their canonical bishops. In short, by a heretic was anciently meant one who dissented from the catholic and apostolic church of the place in which he resided. The term is now considered opprobrious by so many parties, (although that of dissenter, which in truth means nearly the same thing, is sometimes gloried in,) that to use it generally would only be

doctrine and discipline, raised up in the non-jurors an opposition numerically weak, but morally strong, and so rendered it impossible for our then rulers to dare what they desired.

Now to all this I am well aware that an answer may at once be given in accordance with the spirit of the age. When we ask, where would our religion have been, had our predecessors sacrificed truth for the sake of conciliation, it will be answered by many, in the Bible. But to this we may reply, in the first place, that the mere possession of the Bible could not restore to us, what our ancestors were reviled for not renouncing, the succession of the ministry; without which, though in the Bible we should read of sacraments generally necessary to salvation, and of preachers who ought to be sent, yet we should find no one with credentials to prove

to give unnecessary offence;—but the true member of the church of England will resolutely maintain his claim to the title of *catholic*, whether against the Papists, who set up their bishops against those canonical bishops of this country, who alone can prove their mission here, or against other dissenters, who know not, or acknowledge not, the divine right of the church. A catholic was probably so called, because he received the tradition of the *universal church*, when confirmed by Scripture; whereas the heretic would start his own hypothesis, or the supposition of a sect, and then pervert the Scriptures so as to seem to have their support.

his authority to act as an ambassador from Christ, or to officiate as the minister and steward of God's mysteries. But, omitting this circumstance, let us come to yet closer quarters with our opponent. And I will ask, of those here present, *who* they are, and what their number may be, who have worked out their system of religion from the Bible and the Bible only? who have built the fabric of their faith from the materials, and *only* from the materials, which they themselves, without foreign aid, have gathered, assorted, and compared from the Scriptures?

"The Bible," it has been well and wisely observed, "though a most sacred is a most multifarious collection of the records of divine economy,—a collection of an infinite variety of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislation, ethics, carried through different books by different authors at different ages, and, though shaped to the same holy end by the superintending and suggesting Spirit of God, with different purposes in view by the authors themselves. It is necessary to sort out what is intended for example, what only as a narrative, what is to be understood literally, what figuratively; where one precept is to be controlled and modified by another; what is said directly, and what as an ar-

gument ad hominem; what is temporary, and what of eternal obligation; what appropriated to one state or set of men, and what to the general duty of Christians?" Now all this is to be done, if on the Bible and the Bible only we depend for instruction, before our code of morals or system of divinity can be formed. And where is the intellectual son of Anak, who, amid the various claims of society, is sufficient for these things? If this were the business and duty of each individual, *who* could become a Christian before he had descended far into the vale of years, unless he could make up for his deficiency of age by the intensity of his studies? and even then it would be necessary to add to closeness of application, acuteness of intellect and clearness of head? The impossibility of such a proceeding is tacitly admitted even by those who, in theory, take the opposite position, in that they declare, that whatever is fundamental and necessary for salvation is obvious and plain, forgetting all the while that they are thus assuming the very point at issue, since, with respect to what *is* fundamental and necessary to salvation, they require us to take for granted their own assertions, and to admit, at the same time, upon

\* Burke. Speech on the Act of Uniformity.

authority only, the authenticity and genuineness of the books we receive for Scripture, as well as the correctness of the version we use. For plain and obvious are only relative terms;—what is plain and obvious to you may not be so to me, and *vice versa*: so that one sect or party will pronounce *that* to be the plain and obvious sense of Scripture, of which another party will predicate just the reverse. But the time will not permit, nor does the occasion require, that we should dwell longer on this point, since we have only to look at the *facts* of the case. And is it not a *fact*, with respect to the great mass of mankind, that their religion, like their habits, is hereditary; that their opinions are the opinions of their fathers or instructors, corrected and modified it may be, but essentially the same? Is not this, and must not this be the case with the labourer, who is unable, and the handicraftsman who, except for a few hours on the Lord's day, has no time to study the Bible? And even with respect to the better educated classes of society, even with respect to men of learning, does it make no difference as to the amount of their labour, and consequently as to their proficiency, with what feelings, and sentiments, and prejudices, and principles they come to the investigation of Scripture, with what data they

start? If we make an inquiry, the mind will, naturally of itself, first form or receive an hypothesis to give a direction to that inquiry; and is it nothing whether the hypothesis so formed be in favour of or against the truth? Does it signify nothing through what medium the Scripture is viewed? The fire may be the same, but does it matter nothing whether it is to operate on metal, on fuel, on wax, or on clay?—does it matter nothing to what substance the solvent is applied? There is no law so clear but that an objection can be raised against it by a petti-fogger; and there is no passage of Scripture so plain but it may be misinterpreted, misunderstood, or explained away by those whose minds have been contracted and their understandings sophistified by the prejudices of sect or the subtleties of system. Why is it that the Papist, the Presbyterian, the Calvinist, the Arminian, the Socinian, draw inferences so contradictory from the same passages of Scripture? Is it not occasioned by the fact of their education, of the circumstances under which they are placed, of their hereditary opinions, whereby the one party has been accustomed from childhood to consider as a figure, allegory, or emblem, what the other would interpret literally; while all would occasionally demand admissions which the rest

would regard as unreasonable? It is this that makes their conversion, though not impossible, yet certainly a work of difficulty and labour, unless occasioned by some great national convulsion by which the whole order of society is reversed.

If, then, man being an imitative animal, the circumstances under which we are placed, the opinions, manners, feelings, prejudices, examples, and institutions by which we are surrounded, are much to us *all*, and every thing to some of us, does it not become necessary that those who by their station, learning, or talent, have an influence over public opinion, should diligently compare the doctrines they have received from their ancestors with holy writ; and after they are convinced in their minds that they have the truth as God revealed it, should watch over it with a holy jealousy, creating around them as it were a bright pellucid atmosphere by which it may be at once apparent to others, and forming those moral sentiments which, as they precede, so they capacitate the mind for logical deductions, and at the same time to assist those who see by placing them in the best situation for taking a clear and extensive view.

I said, and I repeat it, that such men are sedulously and anxiously to compare the doctrines

they have received with holy writ,—for let it not be for a moment supposed that I would deny that most important truth, that the Bible, and the Bible only, is our *rule* of faith. It is to the neglect and subsequent denial of this solemn fact that almost all the errors of the popish system are to be traced, and against that perversion of Christianity we must resolutely contend that nothing may be imposed as an article of faith, or as necessary to salvation, but what may be read in Scripture, or proved thereby. All that I assert is, that no men actually *do*, and few men living in society *could*, form from the Bible only their religious and moral system; while, on the other hand, I not only admit, but confidently assert, that to confirm, to prove, or to disprove the truth of the system they have inherited, the system transmitted to them, this is what all men of education *can* do, and what (the capacity premised) all men are *bound* to do. For although Scripture may not of necessity be the source from which all our doctrines were immediately imbibed, yet it is the infallible touchstone by which they are to be tried, the balance of the sanctuary in which they are to be weighed, the measure by which they are to be corrected. And the difference between the two processes, between forming a creed for ourselves and proving

the truth of a creed which we have received, is obvious. In this congregation there are many who have skill to demonstrate the truth of the Newtonian theory, but of those, how many are there, who, by merely studying the book of nature, could have discovered the principle of attraction, and then have applied it for the explanation of the solar system ? Of those who apply the prism to the decomposition of a ray of light, who are they who, if Newton had not lived, could have discovered its adaptation to the purposes of science ? In like manner, there are, I hope, none here present who cannot demonstrate from Scripture the truth of those doctrines which are contained in the three creeds,—but if they had never heard of those doctrines before, though they would be still in Scripture, we may safely say, that the notions of many among us, on many of these doctrines, would have been any thing but satisfactory and clear. It is thus that we are to search the Scriptures, which are given as for our comfort, so also to enable us to prove all things; all those things which, from the various circumstances of education and the tradition of the church, we have received; and of these things we are to hold fast that which, after such examination, we find to be good.

Now if we search the Scriptures for the pur-

pose, we shall find these positions fully established,—for we find from Scripture that it was *not* by Scripture that our holy religion was first propagated and established. Prior sermo, says Tertullian, quam liber, prior sensus quam stylus<sup>3</sup>. The Apostles and Evangelists did not sit down, and, acting on a principle contrary to that pursued in the Old Testament, compose a body or system of morals and theology; they did *not* approach the Gentiles and say, here are certain Scriptures composed by inspiration of God,—take them, understand them as best you can, and form out of them a religion each man for himself; on the contrary, they placed their contemporaries in the precise situation in which circumstances have placed their successors,—they gave them a religion antecedent to Scripture—a form of sound words—the one faith or summary of things to be believed—a *ὑποτυπώσις*, or compendium of orthodox doctrine—a good depositum or trust, to which they were exhorted to hold fast,—while from those who walked disorderly and not after the traditions thus received, they were commanded to withdraw themselves; and no sooner was a bishop appointed over one of the apostolical churches than the direction

<sup>3</sup> Tertull. de Test. An. c. 5.

given by St. Paul to that bishop was, *the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou—(not to writing, but παράθον, commit in trust,) to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also*<sup>4</sup>. Now, what is this but saying in other words, lay the foundation of that which (adopting the term from St. Ambrose) I have ventured to call an hereditary religion—a religion which, handed down from generation to generation, may spread like the roots of a tree on and below the surface of society, forming a germinating principle of piety, blending itself with men's modes of thought, and thus influencing indirectly, even when its direct influence is not sought. Here is the foundation, the pillar, the ground of the truth. But, of course, such a religion would soon be liable to corruption, through the weakness of misapprehension in some, and the wickedness of misrepresentation in others. As a safeguard against this, we pos-

<sup>4</sup> Quid est depositum? id est quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum: quod accipisti non quod excogitasti: rem non ingenii sed doctrinæ: non usurpationis privatæ sed publicæ traditionis: rem ad te perductam non a te prolatam: in qua non auctor debes esse sed custos; non institutor sed sectator; non ducens sed sequens. Depositam inquit custodi; Catholiceæ fidei talentum inviolatum illibatumque conserva. Quod tibi creditum, hoc penes te maneat, hoc a te tradatur. *Vincentius Livinensis*, c. xxvii.

sess the Scriptures. This, indeed, is precisely stated by St. Luke. Theophilus, whoever he was or represented, (and if he represented the ordinary Christian, it makes the case more strong,) had been *already* instructed in the doctrines and duties of the Christian profession,—the Gospel of St. Luke was sent to him to declare the *certainty* of those things which he already believed, that is, that he might be able to ascertain therefrom whether he had been correctly instructed. In like manner, with respect to the Epistles, they were written, not to convert heathens, but to instruct converts, and to correct the mistakes which from time to time arose in the traditional religion of the different churches; and thus the Gospels and Epistles remain to us, at the present day, like the two olive trees standing by the golden candlestick, not to supersede the use of the candlestick, but to supply it continually with holy oil. We find it, indeed, assumed in Scripture, that of many duties we shall learn the obligation elsewhere; while the injunctions of the inspired volume simply *imply* their obligation,—(thereby enabling us to *prove* it)—by instructing us as to their *mode* of performance. It is assumed, for instance, that to the end of time Christians will know it to be obligatory upon them to fast, to pray, and to give alms; the scrip-

tural directions are therefore confined as to what we are to do *when* we fast, *when* we pray, *when* we do our alms-deeds. The Bible is not particular as to *how* we gain our faith, it only requires that this faith should exist, and then supplies us with the means of establishing it.

And this was the principle on which we find the Fathers of the church to have acted. The heretic, professing his reverence for Scripture only, would put upon the words of Scripture his own meaning, and then argue that, since they could bear that construction, he was justified in abiding by his conclusions. And thus by Scripture, capriciously interpreted, could every vagary of the intellect be justified; for we have only to look through the coloured medium of our imagination to read in Scripture whatever we please. The argument of the Fathers with these persons was short and conclusive—"we have no such doctrine;" they would say, "neither the churches of God." They appealed to what had been universally received and acted upon in the apostolical churches; and they argued, if this doctrine can be established by the written word, *this* is the doctrine which was actually revealed, and ought consequently to be received, however specious your argument for what is merely a private opinion, originating either in pride of intellect,

the weakness of superstition, or the reveries of fanaticism. The question was not, and is not, what sense will the Scripture bear, but what has, in fact, been revealed. It is by bearing this in mind that we make consistent passages in the Fathers which might otherwise appear inconsistent, and thus gain a strong argument against the Papist; for instance, when we find them at one time referring to the tradition of the church as a guide that they would be most unwilling to forsake, and at another maintaining with all the vigour of their argument that Scripture, and Scripture *alone*, was the rule by which the truth of any doctrine could be proved. Tradition supplied the hypothesis, the church asserted the proposition, and Scripture gave the proof.

And was not this the principle upon which our ancestors here in England acted, when three centuries ago they banished from the church of their forefathers the abominations of popery? Did *they* imagine so vain a device as that every man might go to the Bible, and *that* too a translated one, and carve from thence a religion for himself? If they did, how strangely inconsistent was their conduct in publishing their institutions and necessary doctrines, their injunctions and articles, and catechisms and canons, and homilies,—how much more inconsistent their having

recourse to legal means to silence those who, as they thought, were corrupting, instead of correcting, the opinions of the age! Censures have been past on distinguished foreign reformers for their inconsistency in asserting for themselves the right of private judgment, and yet anathematizing others, when, by the exercise of the same right, they came to opposite conclusions. How they are to be defended it is not for me to say. Suffice it for us to know, that against our own ancestors no such charge can be established. If they did not admit the right of private judgment in *others*, they did not attempt to exercise it themselves. They deferred to catholic tradition on all doubtful points,—but they took leave to enquire what catholic tradition really was, and thus to distinguish it from popish assertion. We have only to refer to their writings to see how sensitive they were when any one insinuated that they wished to depart from catholicism. This might very easily be proved, if the time permitted, by an induction of particulars;—as it is, I will simply refer to one of the latest and most elaborate works of one of our reformers, whose disposition inclined him perhaps to defer, more than others, to the opinion of foreign Protestants;—I allude to Cranmer's answer to Gardyner, and there we shall find him

declaring, that the sense of our Saviour's words must be sought from the old writers, that he impugns not the true catholic faith, but the false papistical faith; that he spurns with indignation the idea of his meaning to set aside the word catholic, or of his going about,—I use his own words,—of his “going about by his own wit, to prove his doctrine, howsoever Scripture hath hitherto been understood.” Nay, speaking of the Lutherans, of whom Gardyner had said that they took his view of the subject, Cranmer remarks, that supposing they did, yet the ancient authors which were next to Christ’s time may not give place to these new men, although they were men of excellent learning and judgment; while in his last solemn appeal to a general council at his degradation, he declares: <sup>5</sup> “ Touching my doctrine of the sacrament and other my doctrine, of what kind soever it be, I protest it was never my mind to write, speak, or understand any thing contrary to the most holy word of God, or else against the holy catholic church of Christ, but purely and simply to imitate and teach those things only which I have learned of the sacred Scripture and of the holy catholic

<sup>5</sup> Archbishop Cranmer’s Remains, published by the Rey. Henry Jenkyns, vol. ii.

church of Christ from the beginning, and also according to the exposition of the most holy and learned fathers and martyrs of the church. And if any thing hath, peradventure, chanced otherwise than I thought, I may err, but heretic I cannot be, forasmuch as I am ready in all things to follow the judgment of the most sacred word of God, and of the holy catholic church." There is more to the same effect; and consequently, if at any time this great man, amidst his many cares, deviated from catholicism, while we correct his error, we should remember to attribute it not to any defect in his principle, but merely to a mistake in its application. The principle which he professed was acted upon by Ridley, and Parker, and Jewell, and their worthy successors, at the Hampton court and Savoy conferences, and procured for the members of the church, from Neal the historian, the designation in mockery of traditioners.

And acting upon this principle, what was it that the great and good men who conducted the Reformation in this country did? Having found an hereditary religion in the land, they compared it, as they were bound to do, and as *we* are bound to do, with Scripture; and they soon discovered many practices and opinions prevalent, inconsistent therewith, and contradictory

thereto. Patiently pursuing these errors to their source, they soon discovered that they were mere innovations of a comparatively modern date,—fungous excrescences which might be easily removed without injury to the tree to which they were attached; and their endeavour was to eradicate from the hereditary religion all papistical novelties, leaving uninjured and untouched what was really catholic. Their object was not to obliterate the old transmitted religion, but merely to correct certain abuses then in existence—to restore it, in short, to its primitive lustre and fragrance,—not to pluck the fair rose of Sharon, but to crush the serpent which lurked beneath its leaves,—not to stop the sun in its course, or to force it from its orb, but to dispel the clouds by which it had become partially eclipsed,—not to destroy the body, but to remove disease from the limbs,—not to dash away the cup out of the people's hand, and thus to leave them without the means of spiritual refreshment, but to precipitate to the bottom the deleterious drugs which an enemy had thrown in;—they found in existence a stream which, flowing from the living Rock, had followed the spiritual Israel of God from the first ages of Christianity, but of which complaint was made that in this part of the world the waters had

become bitter; and in the spirit and power of Moses and Elisha, these commissioned prophets of the Most High, together with the rulers of the people, went forth unto the springs of the waters, and cast into them the salt of God's word, and said, Thus saith the Lord, *I have healed these waters*—and so the waters were healed unto this day.

Thus may we see that with the holy Apostles, the primitive Fathers, and our own Reformers, the simple object being the maintenance and propagation of God's revealed truth, they sought to promote that object, not by the Bible only, or by transmissive religion only, but by the reciprocal influence and conjoined operation of both,—the one suggesting, the other confirming,—the one by the inculcation of moral sentiments and the adoption of the means of grace, training the mind and preparing the soul,—the other given by inspiration for doctrine, for confirmation, for correction or amendment, for instruction in righteousness. If it be said that by this system prejudices are created rather than dispelled, we may admit the fact, and then remind you what a prejudice is. A prejudice is defined to be an opinion which we hold on the authority of another, but the correctness of which we have not as yet proved for ourselves.

To believe, then, a fact or doctrine from prejudice rather than from demonstration or discovery, is by no means irrational; provided that our authority is a good one. It is thus, indeed, that the greater part of our opinions are acquired. The fault with respect to a prejudice is, not the being influenced thereby, but the being influenced too much,—it consists not in its existence, but in its excess, which is called bigotry. For a man who associates with his fellow-creatures to imagine that he can come to the consideration of any important subject without pre-conceived opinions, that is, without prejudice, is mere self-deception; he must either be prejudiced in favour of those tenets in which he has been educated, or (which is generally the sign of a bad disposition) prejudiced against them, or his will be of all bad prejudices the very worst, a morbid prejudice against a prejudice, under which calamity, when a man unfortunately labours, he becomes a weak, miserable, vacillating being, always discussing, but never capable of any great or good action, being like *a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.* Therefore it is that in the revelations we have received from Him to whom all hearts are known, in the Old Testament as well as the New, parents, instructors, and legislators are

enjoined, *not* to provide that the minds of their offspring or their people shall be unprejudiced, but to labour that their prejudices shall be good ones, prejudices in favour of faith, and truth, of God, of virtue, and of the church.

The question between ourselves and the Papists is not whether *any* authority is due to a particular church, but what *degree* of authority. There is surely a medium between an infallible authority and no authority whatever. Our earthly parents or guardians are not infallible, yet still they were, in the first instance, and they continue to be, our authority for believing much that we *do* believe on subjects human as well as divine, philosophical not less than theological. Man does not come into the world, as some sophists would represent, a universal sceptic. It is precisely the reverse. He comes into the world a credulous being, prepared to receive for truth all that he hears. This, being the excess, is an error, and the fault is corrected gradually by experience, and he becomes, not even then a universal sceptic, but merely a cautious believer. The facts he received at first on authority, if questioned, he examines for himself, correcting them if he finds them to have been erroneous, and improving on them, and thus advancing nearer to perfection, when he finds

them to have been correct. And where is the absurdity of acting on the same principle with respect to religion,—of receiving, in the first instance, certain doctrines and articles, because our holy mother the church assures us that they are the doctrines of Scripture, and the church universal, of which she is a part, though we may not as yet have compared them ourselves with holy writ? Where is the absurdity of obeying the Holy Ghost, and permitting the church in which we have been educated thus to become to us the ground and pillar of truth?—for, let it be remembered, that it was of a particular, and therefore of a fallible church, that St. Paul spake these words. Where is the absurdity of permitting the church to act towards us, as the woman of Samaria to the men of Sychem? She testifies to us of Jesus, on her authority we come into his presence, on her testimony we are inclined to receive him as the Son of God, and happy are we if after a time we can say, *Now we believe not because of thy word*,—not merely on that account, which led us to believe in the first instance, but because we have heard him ourselves, and know, by patient investigation and the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit upon our souls, that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

If it be said, that in challenging this authority, not merely for the church universal, but for a particular church, we cannot, if we would be consistent, censure the sectarian for paying the like deference to his sect, I answer, at once, we ought not to do so. The child that is born of ignorant or evil parents has many and great difficulties to encounter in order to arrive at that degree of information or virtue, which is attained, with comparative ease, by those who are more happily circumstanced. So is it with respect to those who have been brought up in the bad prejudices of a sect; there is a strict analogy between the two cases. And in attempting to convert a sectarian, I should never wish to shake that good principle which might lead him to defer to the system in which he was educated,—I should rather say, (confident in the righteousness of my own cause,) “Wherever there is a doubt as to the meaning of Scripture, if you cannot ascertain the opinion of the church universal, let it be interpreted in favour of your sect,—and then see whether, in *spite* of this, you are not in error.” If you adopt a different course, you may perhaps shake a man’s faith in the opinions of his sect; but having robbed him of a right, though a humiliating, principle of action, it is very doubtful whether you will con-

verf. him to the truth, whether you will have done more than prepare him to sink from one creed to another until at length he settles in the lowest depth of scepticism or unbelief. In making converts, as in too many of our modern religious proceedings, the end aimed at is too often regarded exclusively of the means to be adopted, and our exertions consequently terminate in disappointment and disgust.

While what has thus now been advanced may tend to shew the importance of not compromising the truth as it is in Jesus, at a time when infidel superstition is seeking to take from, as, in times past, popish superstition endeavoured to add to, the word of God, I hope it will be fairly examined and duly weighed by my younger brethren, especially by those who are intended for holy orders. Let them remember that at the commencement of their career, at all events, the usages of the church ought to be the subject not of their criticism, but of their meditation—that, as the son of Sirach says, they ought to examine the matter before they blame, and to understand before they rebuke,—that in yielding to the authority of the church, the question is not whether *they* can see the wisdom of her regulations, but simply whether the observance of those regulations be a sin,—that, to say the

very least of it, in every instance, the church is more *likely* to be right than an inexperienced individual,—that, as Bishop Taylor observes, with his usual wisdom, authority is a good rule of acting until a stronger comes. Let them eschew that proud restlessness as to received opinions by which the irreligious world is characterized, and avoid the presumption of those, who, without examination, think it a sufficient excuse for neglecting some parts and altering others of our ritual, for curtailing an office *here* and omitting a creed *there*,—to say “*I* do not see the use of doing *this*; *I* do not see the harm of leaving undone *that*,” as if *I* were infallible.—No, my brethren, I hope that you will treat with more deference and respect the authority of the church, through whose good offices you were spiritually born, and through whose tender care you have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and taught to rely for salvation, and to rely only, on the atoning merits and sanctifying spirit of your Saviour. And this I will promise you, that if, thus commencing, you proceed to enquire with caution, and determine with humility, you will daily find more and more cause to bless your God, that you have descended from those who, in conducting the Reformation, were not proud in their own con-

ceits, but asked for the old paths, and made straight the good way in which by a providential concurrence of circumstances you are placed. You will gradually discover the importance of much which you may now deem trivial, and see wisdom in what you may, at one time, have regarded as defects. Commence with treating the church as your mother, and you will end, in finding her to be, as she is, a most holy mother, whom you will love, not merely as a means, but as an end; whom you will delight to honour, and for whom you will be prepared, as in these perilous times we all *ought* to be prepared, to die. You will reverence her as the Spouse of Christ, *as the King's Daughter all glorious within, with her clothing of wrought gold, and her garments smelling of myrrh, aloes, and cassia*;—you will venerate her for the majestic simplicity and calm dignity with which she administers to her children, not intoxicating cordials, but the sincere milk of the word; for her zeal without intolerance, her moderation without lukewarmness, her faith without fanaticism, her piety without superstition;—you will delight in evincing towards her your filial piety, by performing all the offices she imposes upon you, not coldly, according to the letter, but according to the fulness and fervour of her meaning: and though

you may find cause to lament that the hands of her discipline are crippled by the jealousy of the state, yet this will not prevent your addressing her with the feelings of chastened enthusiasm, and saying, "though not infallible, thou hast not failed."

## SERMON IV.

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### JEREMIAH vi. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

WE frequently hear persons referring to the sentiments and quoting the opinions of the reformers, foreign and domestic, of the sixteenth century, as if they were authoritative in the interpretation of Scripture, and as if it were incumbent upon us to be silent whenever they may speak. Yet why we should pay more of deference to the opinions of wise and good and learned men of the sixteenth century, than we do to the opinions of wise and good and learned men of the nineteenth century, is a question more easily asked than satisfactorily answered. Why should Luther, or Melancthon, or Calvin

be regarded, extrinsically, as commentators of Scripture, more skilful than any who have succeeded them, and who, in many respects, have possessed superior advantages ? Why should Cranmer, or Ridley, or Latimer, be more free from error than our present metropolitan and his suffragans ? Good men they doubtless were, and great men, but still they were only gifted with those ordinary graces of the Spirit which the church still dispenses. Our debt to them is great for their exertions against popery ; our debt to our own Reformers is greater still for their having, in most instances, clearly marked the difference between true catholicism and Romanism, and their example in contending for, yea, in dying for, what they believed to be God's truth, is to be zealously upheld, as worthy of imitation, to an age more distinguished for light than for love. But still they were not infallible, they were not faultless ;—in many respects they were all of them faulty; and therefore, when to their dicta an appeal is made, as if from their decisions it were almost heresy to depart, we may fairly demand the grounds on which such authority is made to rest.

But although *their* authority cannot be established, although the Reformers were not one whit more infallible than the pope of Rome, yet

the fact that their writings are published and quoted as works to be referred to for the decision of controversies, proves that some authority is wanted,—that the human mind, amid the prevailing collision of sentiment, while Scripture is made to speak one thing by this party and directly the reverse by that, is desirous of finding an umpire to whose decisions it may bow. The Roman church is loud in her boastings and promises on this head; and, as assertions are often taken for facts, we may attribute to this circumstance the many converts made to the popish system, wherever its more hideous features are concealed, and among those who are deficient in learning to perceive, that the claims of the pope of Rome can be substantiated, neither by Scripture, nor by the consent of the universal church, (the Greek church even to this day protesting against popish usurpation as rigorously as we do ourselves,) nor by any thing like primitive practice. These claims have been, in fact, a gradual encroachment upon the liberty of the church, of which almost each step can be distinctly traced.

But, admitting that the authority neither of popish prelate nor of protestant reformer can be established; admitting, and contending as we do for, the sufficiency of Scripture, does it follow

that there is *no* authority to be discovered sufficient to determine our judgments when Scripture appears to be ambiguous, or when from the same passages contradictory doctrines are inferred? Not so, says the church of England. Her spirit may be gathered from the rules given to our divines, when, in the early days of the Reformation, they were appointed to hold a conference with certain popish priests and jesuits<sup>1</sup>. “If they, the Papists, will shew any ground of Scripture, and wrest it to their own sense, let it be shewed by the interpretation of the old doctors, such as were before Gregory I.” “If they can shew no doctor that agreed with them in their said opinion before that time, then conclude that they have no succession in that doctrine from the Apostles’ time and above four hundred years after; when doctrine and religion were most pure; for that they can shew no predecessor whom they can succeed in the same. *Quod primum verum. Tertullian.*” Would that those unauthorised individuals and self-appointed polemics, who rashly and presumptuously challenge the Romanists to discussion in the present day, had never forgotten the rules laid down by the church to which they still profess to belong,

<sup>1</sup> Strype’s Life of Abp. Whitgift, vol. i. p. 196.

when she thus sent forth her children to fight with the enemy!

But it was not only with respect to the Romanist that this rule was observed; when a commission was issued for the trial of heretics, an especial provision was made that no spiritual person should have any authority or power, however commissioned, to determine or judge any matter to be heresy, but only such as had heretofore been determined, or ordered, or adjudged to be heresy by the canonical Scriptures, or by the four first general councils<sup>2</sup>. Nor is it only with respect to heresies that this rule is to be observed; it is also expressly ordained by canon, that the clergy, in their exposition of doctrine, shall receive as their guide, in subordination to Scripture, the catholic Fathers and primitive bishops<sup>3</sup>. The same rule was laid down for the observance of the divines commissioned to make that version of the Bible which we still retain; for they were directed to refer to "the most celebrated Fathers, when any word had several significations<sup>4</sup>"; and we still find the rule enforced in the proclamation for the last review of

<sup>2</sup> Collier, Eccles. Hist. ii. 421.

<sup>3</sup> Liber Canon. Discip. Eccles. Angl. A. D. 1571. Canon de Concionatoribus.

<sup>4</sup> Collier, ii. 694.

the Book of Common Prayer; the duty of the persons appointed for that purpose being declared to be, “to compare the same with the most ancient liturgies that have been used in the church in the primitive and purest times.” But *other* documents it must be unnecessary to produce, in order to prove the deference for antiquity, which has ever since the Reformation been evinced by the church in this country; for what indeed are our creeds, but the creeds unaltered of the primitive church? What our articles and homilies but the mere application of ancient principles to modern controversies and practices, intended chiefly as a direction to those who want either means or ability to consult the original authorities? What is our Common Prayer Book itself but a digest of the prayers which have been used in the church universal from the remotest antiquity?

The rule, therefore, in the church of England is this:—we receive our doctrine from the present church with due deference, but, admitting the possibility of error, we prove what we have thus received by Scripture; and when we are doubtful as to the meaning of Scripture, we then seek to ascertain the primitive tradition by hav-

ing recourse to the writings of the Fathers and the history of the church. For example, we receive the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from the church, who states it in her articles and creeds, and practically enforces it in her liturgy; but since the church in this country is not infallible, we go to Scripture to discover whether what she asserts be really so or not; but of the passages adduced from Scripture, the Socinians and Arians put on some, a meaning different from that which we are inclined to think correct;—here, then, we go to the primitive church, and according to her interpretation we consider the question to be decided<sup>6</sup>.

But here the argument may be thought to recoil. The mere circumstance of an opinion being ancient is no proof of its being true, and it may be fairly demanded, why the opinions of learned men in the second or third century should have more authority than the opinions of learned men of the sixteenth century; why the opinion of even a Gregory or a Chrysostom

<sup>6</sup> “ I use herein the wise counsel of Vincentius Lirinensis, whom I am sure you will allow, who giving precepts how the catholic church may be, in all heresies and schisms, known, writeth in this manner: ‘ When one part is corrupted with heresies, then prefer the whole world to that part: but if the greater part be infected, then prefer antiquity.’ ” Bishop Ridley, *Wordsworth's Biog.* p. 230.

should have more weight than that of Cranmer or Ridley, supposing the latter to be equal with the former in ability? And doubtless there would be some force in this objection, if this were a question merely of *opinions*, but it is really a question not of opinion but of *fact*. It is not to discover the opinions of individuals, however worthy of consideration the opinions of great and good individuals may be, that we go back to the early days of Christianity, but it is to ascertain what was once for all delivered to the saints by the inspired Apostles; to discover what traces remain of the doctrine and discipline ordained by them when they founded those primitive churches from which all others have descended;—a tradition which we use, not, like the Papists, because we think the Scriptures to be insufficient, but to enable us to elucidate and understand more clearly what Scripture enjoins or reveals, to ascertain *the* meaning, the precise meaning, when more meanings than one can be extracted from the same passage; and thus to prevent the fancies of visionary men from usurping the place of God's truth, under the plea and appearance of that scriptural authority they do not really possess.

Now if we could discover the system of doctrine which the Apostles delivered to the churches

they founded, every one, I presume, would be ready to admit that this system would claim due deference from sound reason as well as from Christian humility. The objection I apprehend to be this; that to discover this traditio exegetica is impossible;—an objection more easily stated than confirmed.

A very slight acquaintance with the early history of the church will serve to convince us, first, that the primitive Christians acted upon precisely the same principle on which the church of England still acts, namely, that on all disputed points of scriptural interpretation, before they came to a decision, they were accustomed to make inquiry as to what had been delivered to the apostolical churches; and, secondly, that, for the first four or five centuries at least, the greatest possible care was taken to preserve this traditio exegetica in its purity.

As to the first point, it need not detain us long; for to what but to this does Irenæus refer, when speaking of the κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας<sup>6</sup>? To what but to this does Clemens Alexandrinus refer, when speaking of the κανὼν ἐκκλησιαστι-

<sup>6</sup> Adv. Hæres. lib. i. cap. 9. §. 4. See the whole subject admirably treated by Irenæus. Regula Fidei. Edit. Routh, p. 690.

What is the whole of Tertullian's admirable book, *De Præscriptione*, but an application of this principle to existing controversies? Now the mere circumstance that this principle was avowed, the profession of it being the very principle which distinguished the catholic from the heretic<sup>8</sup>, would incline us to conclude that steps

<sup>1</sup> Ström. lib. vi. c. 15. In the Recognitions of Clement, a work of the second century, a very striking passage occurs, which I cannot refrain from transcribing. After having observed that there are many passages in Scripture which are capable of being drawn to that sense in favour of which we are prejudiced, he proceeds, "Non sensum, quem extrinsecus attuleris, alienum et extraneum, debes querere, quem ex Scripturarum auctoritate confirmes, sed ex ipsis scripturis sensum capere veritatis. Et ideo oportet ab eo intelligentiam distare Scripturarum qui eam a majoribus, secundum veritatem sibi traditam, servat, ut et ipse posset ea, quæ recte suscepit, competenter adserere." Lib. x. c. 42. The principle is clearly stated, Tertull. de Præscript. xxii. et xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> This is expressly stated by Vincentius Lirinensis:— "Quibus tamen cunctis satis evidenter perspicueque monstratur, hoc apud omnes fere hæreses quasi solemne esse ac legitimum, ut semper prophanis novitatibus gaudeant, antiquitatibus scita fastidiant, et per oppositiones falsi nominis scientiæ a fide naufragent. Contra vero, Catholicorum hoc fere proprium, deposita sanctorum Patrum et commissa servare, damnare prophanas novitates, et sicut dixit et iterum dixit Apostolus: *Si quis annunciarerit, præterquam quod acceptum est, anathemare,*" cap. xxxiv. It is not improbable that the title of *catholic* was applied to the orthodox from the prin-

would be taken to preserve the tradition, at least in its important features, genuine and pure. The opposition of the heretics would conduce to this end, as the heretic would, of course, put the catholic or orthodox to silence at once, if he knew of a church in which the doctrine asserted to be universally held was rejected or unknown. But the contrary fact, the fact that the Scriptures were interpreted in a uniform sense, that in all the apostolical churches in all the different parts of the world a harmony of doctrine existed; is expressly affirmed by Irenæus<sup>9</sup>, by Tertullian<sup>1</sup>, by Hegesippus<sup>2</sup>, by Clemens Alexandrinus<sup>3</sup>, and by Origen<sup>4</sup>. Nay, more,—we find the whole discipline of the church

ciple of the orthodox in thus seeking always to ascertain the *universal* tradition before coming to a decision on any doctrinal question.

<sup>9</sup> Lib. i. c. 10. alias 3. Lib. iii. c. 3.

<sup>1</sup> Præscript. xx. xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Apud Euseb. lib. iv. c. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Strom. vii. p. 898, 899. Conf. Strom. i. p. 322. See Waterland on Ecclesiastical Antiquity, chap. vii.

<sup>4</sup> The statement in Origen is so important that I insert it here:—Cum multi sint qui se putant scire quæ Christi sunt, et nonnulli eorum diversa prioribus sentiant, servetur vero ecclesiastica prædicatio per successonis ordinem ab Apostolis tradita, et usque ad præsens in Ecclesiis (the third century) permanens: illa sola credenda est veritas quæ in nullo ab ecclesiastica traditione discordat. Origen. in Apolog. Pamph. inter opp. Hieron. tom. v. p. 223.

organized for the very purpose of ascertaining and preserving the “*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*”

In the primitive ages bishops were regarded not in the light of independent governors of their respective churches, but as members of the one great episcopal college which had been incorporated by Christ, and to which the individual members were amenable<sup>4</sup>. As each bishop was regarded as the principle of unity in his own church, so was the college of bishops regarded as the principle of unity in the church universal. And in order to preserve this unity, a constant intercourse and correspondence was kept up between the bishops and the different churches: the very first act, indeed, of a bishop was to send communicatory letters to the neighbouring bishops to assure them both of his fraternal disposition and the orthodoxy of his creed. And so necessary were these encyclical letters esteemed, that, according to Liberatus, the omission to send one implied either a charge of heresy against the prelates neglected, or the existence of heresy in the party refusing to write<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> St. Cyprian, Ep. 55. and 68. See the same Father for the subsequent statements, Ep. 59. 45. 25. 29. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Bingham xvi. ci. §. 8. By the 19th canon of the Council of Antioch it would seem that, at the consecration of a bishop,

But here it may be asked, how it could be possible for all the bishops of all the churches to be thus in communication, Irenæus informing us that even in his time there were churches in Germany, in Spain, in France, as well as in the East, in Egypt, in Africa, and in the middle of the world, in which one and the same tradition was preserved<sup>6</sup>. To this difficulty an answer can be readily given by referring again to the admirable discipline of the early ages. The bishops to whom these letters were addressed were those of the same province, or those who acted under the same primus or metropolitan,—the metropolitan corresponded with the patriarch, and the patriarchs with one another. So that by these means the whole Christian world was regarded, as the primitive Christians loved to express it, as *one episcopate*. “There is,” says St. Cyprian<sup>7</sup>, “one episcopate whereof diverse bishops spread over the face of the whole world,

all, or at least the majority, of the bishops of the province ought to attend. It is with reference to this view of the subject, if I may hazard a conjecture, that we may attribute the canon which requires that the consecrators of a bishop shall not, except in cases of necessity, be fewer in number than three; *tres faciunt collegium*, being a maxim of Roman law, so important a rite was not to be administered but by the consent of the episcopal college.

<sup>6</sup> Routh, *Opuscula*, p. 690.

<sup>7</sup> Ep. 55.

and *acting together with one harmonious concert* are severally partakers." So much for the admirable machinery by which the whole church could be preserved in unity.

And now let us see how it was employed. The custom of the church enforced by the canons (even the very earliest canons we possess) was that provincial synods should be held twice every year<sup>8</sup>; and the result of these conferences was conveyed by means of this kind of correspondence from one part of the world to another; so that it would have been immediately known if any one church had departed from the original faith. We have instances of this kind of correspondence in the case of the lapsed, when the same conclusion as to their treatment was arrived at, in the third century, by all the churches, as easily as if a general council had been held<sup>9</sup>. Eusebius mentions the existence in his day of an epistle from the church of Palestine, another from the church of Rome, another from the bishops of Pontus, another from the church of Gaul<sup>1</sup>, and many others, for the purpose of ascertaining the traditional prac-

<sup>8</sup> Ante-Nicene Code, canon 38. Nicene Council, canon 5. Antioch, canon 20. Constantinople, canon 6. Chalcedon, canon 19.

<sup>9</sup> St. Cyprian, Ep. 55.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. v. cap. 23. ad cap. 28.

tice with respect to the observation of Easter. The bishops of Palestine having, as Eusebius says<sup>2</sup>, treated at large concerning the tradition that had come down to them in regular succession from the Apostles, conclude their epistle with the following direction: “ Make it your business to send copies of this our letter throughout the whole church ;” adding, that they had already received letters on the same subject from Alexandria<sup>3</sup>. In like manner, the bishops who assembled to condemn the heresies of Paul of Samosata immediately dispatched an epistle to all the provinces to notify what had been done<sup>4</sup>;—an epistle addressed to all their fellow-ministers all over the world, bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and to the whole catholic church under heaven, and mentioning by name the metropolitans by whom the letter was to be circulated, and in this letter the heresies of Paul are censured as novelties, that is, as contrary to the received and transmitted or traditional doctrine

<sup>2</sup> Cap. 25.

<sup>3</sup> The fact appears to be, that nothing had been *delivered* upon the subject ;—there was no universal tradition, though there was a general practice ; and therefore, when the question was settled at the Council of Nice, the Fathers used the form ἔδοξε πάντας πειθεσθαι, it seemed good to us that all should obey, or observe, that time, which they had defined.

<sup>4</sup> Euseb. vii. 30.

of the church. With respect to the circular letters generally, the greatest possible care was taken against imposition or forgery; for not only were they signed by the presiding bishop, but the messenger who conveyed them was one of the most trust-worthy of his clergy. They were indeed called *literæ formatæ*, because they were written in a peculiar form, with some peculiar marks or characters, which served as signatures to distinguish them from counterfeits<sup>5</sup>. The bishop receiving such a letter was obliged to communicate it to his brethren<sup>6</sup>; thus we find St. Cyprian transmitting letters relating to the lapsed to Caldonius with the avowed object that one course, one resolution, might be observed by the whole college of bishops, while his own letters were dispatched to all quarters of the world. Optatus<sup>7</sup> is thus justified in his remark that the whole world was united in one common society or communion by the mutual intercourse of these canonical letters.

Now such being the discipline of the ancient church, was it probable that the traditional doctrine would be materially corrupted? On the contrary, it was almost impossible, the rule be-

<sup>5</sup> Bingham, ii. 4. §. 5. and St. Cyprian, Ep. 29.

<sup>6</sup> St. Cyprian, Ep. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Lib. ii. p. 48.

ing with all these corresponding churches, as Vincentius Lirinensis tells us, to keep that delivered to their trust, and to innovate in nothing, and *that* only being regarded as authoritative, in the assertion of which all the independent churches of the world agreed. The interpretation of Scripture in all catholic churches being on all important points uniform, well may Tertullian ask<sup>8</sup>, Is it possible to suppose that so many and such great churches should have *blundered* into one and the same faith? No; the fact, that in so many churches one and the same doctrine and discipline prevailed, is a proof that what they held was not held by mere chance, but received by tradition. And when, afterwards, general councils were convoked, the object in those councils was not to deduce new doctrines from Scripture, but simply to ascertain the universal tradition as to disputed points. The Fathers of the Nicene Council were very careful to declare that the form of faith they promulgated was not an invention or deduction of their own, but the very same which they had

<sup>8</sup> De Præscript. Hær. cap. xxviii. Ecquid verisimile est, ut tot ac tantæ in unam fidem erraverint? Nullus inter multos eventus unus est exitus; variasse debuerant ordinem (*for* nullis inter multos eventus unus est exitus; variasse debuerant ordine) doctrinæ ecclesiarum. Cæterum quod apud multos unum invenitur, non est erratum, sed traditum.

received when they were first instructed in the principles of religion<sup>9</sup>. And the Novatian Bishop Acesius himself admitted to Constantine, that it was no new thing that was then decided on, but that the Council had decided according to tradition<sup>1</sup>. And this was probably the reason why, at the commencement of the session, when the logicians began to discuss and dispute, they were immediately put to silence;—the Fathers had come not to debate about the faith, but to bear testimony<sup>2</sup>. The fact is clearly stated by Eusebius, in a Letter which he wrote to his diocese on the occasion:—“As we have received by tra-

<sup>9</sup> Soc. lib. i. c. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Soc. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> “The orthodox, and especially those great saints, who knew by experience that God reveals to the meek and humble what he hides from the proud, desired to keep entirely to what had been already received by *tradition*, without endeavouring to give *new turns* to the words of Scripture, in order to interpret it in a different manner from what their forefathers had learned from the Apostles. But the Arians, who could not find in it that which they maintained, presumed, on the contrary, that they ought not to stand to that which had been held by the primitive Christians, because they were not certain of it, and therefore they desired that the truth of their doctrine might be sought from Scripture alone, which they could wrest to their own sense by their false subtleties.” *Maimbourg, Hist. Arian.*, Webster’s Translation. He refers to Ruff. Sozom. lib. i. cap. 18. Niceph. lib. viii. 17.

dition from our predecessors the bishops, then when we were instructed in the first principles of the faith, and received baptism, as we have learned from the sacred Scriptures, so also we do now believe and do make a public declaration of our faith<sup>3</sup>." The very contest about the word *homo-ousion* may be traced to the misapplication of this principle. It was thought by some to be a new word, although it was used to express the fact universally acknowledged.

It were easy to shew that the same principle prevailed in the other three general councils which are received by the church of England; but, in order to avoid prolixity, I shall refer particularly only to the last, that of Chalcedon. The object of this synod, as declared by itself, was to vindicate the doctrine which from the beginning had continued unshaken<sup>4</sup>; it was

<sup>3</sup> Soc. i. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, lib. ii. cap. 4. The *Definitio Fidei apud concilium Chalcedonium* may be found in the *Scriptorum ecclesiasticorum opuscula præcipua quædam*, by Dr. Routh. As these Sermons were preached in the hope of benefiting the undergraduates, they are now published with the same view; and they will not have been published in vain, if they induce any of the young men intended for holy orders to study the last-named work, where, within a small compass, and at a small cost, they may have a whole body of sound catholic divinity. Under ordinary circumstances to say any

convoked for the express purpose of preventing the introduction of novelties; the members solemnly disclaimed any wish of adding to the faith<sup>5</sup>, and they as solemnly professed to follow, the steps of the Fathers<sup>6</sup>.

I do not intend to say that there was nothing discussed at these Councils, for there were many

thing in eulogy of Dr. Routh would be an act of impertinence; under existing circumstances the writer may be pardoned for transcribing the following passage written by the late Dr. Parr. "Dr. Routh, in the language of Milton, is the virtuous son of a virtuous father, whose literary attainments are respected by every scholar to whom he is known; whose exemplary virtues shed a lustre on that church in which they have not been rewarded, and whose grey hairs will never descend to the grave but amidst the blessings of the devout and the tears of the poor."—"His independence of spirit is the effect not of ferocious pride, but of a cool and steady principle, which claims only the respect which it is ever ready to pay, and which equally despairs to trample on subordination, and to crouch before the insolence of power. His correct judgment, his profound erudition, and his various knowledge, are such as seldom fall to the lot of man. His liberality is scarcely surpassed even by his orthodoxy, and his orthodoxy is not the tumid and fungous excrescence of prejudice, but the sound and mellowed fruit of honest and indefatigable inquiry. In a word, his mind, his whole mind, is decked at once with the purest crystals of simplicity, and the brightest jewels of benevolence and piety." Parr's Works, vol. iii. p. 285.

<sup>5</sup> See Canon xxviii.

<sup>6</sup> Πάντες οἱ εὐλαβέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι ἐβοήσαν· Δικαιὰ ἡ κρίσις τῶν πατέρων. Canones Chalcedonensis concilii univ. p. 419.

points open to discussion, namely, all that related to the regulation of the different churches; —I only contend that such was not the case when articles of *faith* were under consideration. It is most important to make this distinction, and nothing can more strongly prove the distinction, than the difference in the form of words used when any canon pertaining merely to a rite or ceremony, or to a case of discipline was ordained, from that adopted when assent was given to an article of faith; in the former case, the form was, ἔδοξε τὰ ὑποτέλαγμάνα, (these things seem good to us,) in the latter, οὕτως πιστεύει ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία (so the catholic church believes); not presuming to act on their own judgment, but simply declaring the fact of tradition<sup>7</sup>.

Indeed the proceedings which took place before a general council assembled are sufficient to shew that the members attended, (so far as the faith was concerned,) not as representatives to

<sup>7</sup> Athanasius, De Syn. quoted by Hammond in his Parœnisis, p. 558. Hammond continues, "To which purpose also was, I suppose, the second versicle in the doxology, (the orthodoxal form of acknowledging the Trinity,) *As it was in the beginning, as it stood by original tradition apostolical, is now and ever shall be, world without end. No new doctrine ever to be brought into the church, by whatsoever council, but only that which the Apostles had delivered.*"

debate, but as delegates commissioned to bear witness. No sooner were the patriarchs apprised of the matter about to come before the general council than they gave notice to the metropolitans, by whom provincial synods were immediately convoked. These provincial synods consisted of the metropolitan and his suffragans, attended by their presbyters; and here the business coming on at the general council, was duly considered, and then by common consent certain principal bishops were appointed to convey to the general council the sentiments of the provincial one<sup>8</sup>. Thus we find John of Antioch sending an apology to the third general council for his non-attendance on the appointed day, because he had not had time to collect the bishops of his province, some of whom were distant a twelve days' journey<sup>9</sup>. That the patriarchs themselves, whatever powers they may afterwards have usurped, attended not as independent authorities, but to bear testimony to the tradition preserved in their patriarchates, is clear from this, that although, in the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, Nestorius and Dioscorus refused to attend, yet the council proceeded to

<sup>8</sup> Field on the Church, book v. chap. 49.

<sup>9</sup> Evagrius Scholasticus, lib. i. c. 3.

condemn the heretical patriarchs, because, the metropolitans being present, the patriarchates were represented. No council was considered general until all the patriarchates were represented; thus the council of Ephesus was not accounted a general one until the arrival of John of Antioch<sup>1</sup>. So that the decree of a general council was received, not because a general council was thought to be infallible, but because what was there promulgated, if not contradicted, was regarded as the tradition of the universal church. And it is by bearing this in mind, that we can vindicate the church of this country from an apparent inconsistency, when on the one hand she refers to the four first general councils as an authority, and on the other hand states, in the twenty-first article, that general councils may err and have erred. A general council, as such, is to us of no authority, except so far as our bishops see fit to accord with its appointments; the four first general councils are referred to, not because they were general councils, but because they were what one of the Fathers calls them,—conservatories of tradition. They asserted the tradition of the catholic church, the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab*

<sup>1</sup> See Field, p. 648.

*omnibus*; and these articles of faith, thus traditionally preserved and handed down by the church, being such as can be proved by Scripture, we hold them to be precisely what God has revealed.

We have thus seen on what strong grounds that authority rests, to which the church of England appeals, when the meaning of Scripture is controverted; and to the writings of our eminent and learned divines in the different branches of theology we may triumphantly refer, as affording to the ordinary reader a digest of that primitive tradition which we have seen the ancients thus carefully and piously preserve. To guard against misrepresentation or misunderstanding, I must allude once again to what I hinted at before, the difference between our position and that of the church of Rome, with regard to this doctrine. The modern church of Rome receives as tradition what she cannot *prove* to be really such, and regards it as *independent* of Scripture. The primitive church was most careful to receive as tradition only what was universally received as such, and then used it merely as elucidatory of Scripture<sup>2</sup>, not as the light, but

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, who strongly insisted upon the line of argument adopted in this discourse, was almost fanatical in his reverence for Scripture. See Bp. Kaye, p. 290.

as a lanthorn to guard the light; nor if as the light, merely as a beam to illumine the page which might otherwise be illegible. And such are the principles of the catholic church of England. And let such be the principles of all her true and faithful and loyal children and subjects. In forming our analogy of faith, let us, when duly prepared by prayer, compare Scripture with Scripture; let us attend to the criticism of the Bible; let us attend to its grammatical interpretation; but let us place all under the supervision and correction of catholic tradition. Situated as we are with the rationalist on the one hand and the papist on the other, both parties vigorously cheered on by the professors of a liberality which amounts to indifference if not to hostility, with the sea before us and the armies of Egypt behind us, let us stand in the way and see and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and seek rest unto our souls by walking therein. Let us think deeply, for without deep thought as well as fervent prayer, who can catch even a glimpse of the sublimities of the Gospel? Who can understand the mercies of redeeming love and sanctifying grace? Who can worship the holy and undivided Trinity with the understanding and the spirit? But if peradventure we find that our

soaring thoughts have led us, at any time, to conclusions at variance with what was held as scriptural in the primitive church, let us at least have the modesty to suppose that there is a *possibility*, yea that there is a *probability* of our being in error; and commencing our inquiries anew, let our object be not self-vindication, but to discover wherein the flaw in our reasoning consists; for, to conclude in the words of a divine, of whose learning, judgment, and caution there can be but one opinion: "If what appears *probably* to be taught in Scripture, appears *certainly* to have been taught in the primitive and catholic church, such probability, so strengthened, carries with it the force of demonstration<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>3</sup> Waterland, Pref. to Moyer's Lecture.

## SERMON V.

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MATT. vii., the 13th and three following verses.

*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.*

IT is in the concluding portion of the sermon on the mount that the words of our text occur. And verily, my brethren, if the virtues inculcated in this divine discourse, and the duties it enjoins, be incumbent upon all who name the name of Christ, strait indeed must be the gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto life.

We are to be pure in spirit, humble in thought, and meek in temper; we must not only abstain

from the perpetration of evil, but eradicate every evil desire : we must hunger and thirst after righteousness : and, loving peace, we must, nevertheless, be ready to sacrifice peace, yea even life itself, for the maintenance and propagation of God's truth : we are to eschew vain glory, and yet, while not looking to the praise of the world as the end of our actions, we are to let the light of our example shine before men, that, seeing our good works, they too may glorify God : we are neither to indulge ourselves nor to sanction in others the wilful breach of the least of the commandments, and anger and every other evil passion are to be mortified, though it be to us as the plucking out of a right eye, or the cutting off of a right hand : with an earnest desire of doing the duties of the station to which we are called, we are to unite that unhesitating acquiescence and ready submission to the will of Providence made known to us by circumstances as they occur, which forms an essential ingredient in the virtue of faith : and in order to sustain this habit in us, we are (not without fasting) to have recourse to prayer : lenient in our judgment of others, severe only to ourselves, we are, in short, to be pious, benevolent, and self-denying.

Such is a brief catalogue of some of the leading

topics of that sermon on which the true Christian delights to meditate, and never can meditate without self-abasement,—for brief and imperfect as this summary may be, we cannot come to its conclusion without feeling, I repeat, how strait is the gate and how narrow the way that leadeth unto life. But far more do we feel how strait indeed must that gate be, and how narrow that way, when we reflect that to render the one accessible and to open the other, it was necessary for the everlasting Son of God to empty himself of his glory, to take upon him our nature, and being found in fashion as a man to die the ignominious death of the cross.

... And yet, my brethren, (plain as this appears to be,) if we look to the world, what is it that we find ? Do we not see the generality of mankind assuming for granted the very contrary of all this, acting as if nothing could be broader than the way, nothing wider than the gate that leadeth unto life, nothing easier than to pass through its crowded portals ? If it be admitted that there may be a heaven, does there not seem to be a practical scepticism as to the existence of a hell ? Is there not a careless, thoughtless assumption of the benevolence of the Deity, with, at the same time, an utter forgetfulness of his justice ? and is it not, in consequence, taken for

granted that we may do as we will here, and yet that all will be well hereafter? Whereas, in point of fact, the benevolence of the Deity is precisely that attribute which natural religion finds it most difficult to establish. The universe exhibits such marks of design, and of a designing mind, that the fool is scarcely in these days to be found who says in his heart there is no God. And if there be a God, it will soon be admitted that he is a Being almighty; for to assert the contrary is to assume the existence of a cause prior to the first, and of a Lawgiver higher than the highest. A God not omnipotent is no God in the proper sense of the word. But though his eternal power of Godhead are thus clearly seen, whether (without the aid of revelation) we could say as much with respect to the divine benevolence and mercy, this may admit of a doubt. In pursuing this enquiry, the existence of evil meets us at every turn. The argument *a priori* that we can conceive no reason why the Deity should be malevolent is merely an appeal to our ignorance. That there is more of happiness than of misery in the world, we may indeed gratefully acknowledge; but still the question recurs, if God be omnipotent, why the evil at all? It is true that the design in all things is benevolent, the evil only incidental, it

is true, as Paley remarks<sup>1</sup>, that evil is never the object of contrivance,—but still, if God be almighty, why the incidental evil? The advocate for natural religion does indeed most satisfactorily shew that there is nothing in nature which argues the malevolence of the Deity; and that, admitting his benevolence to be proved, it is easy to reconcile with the admitted fact, the existence of a certain degree of incidental evil; but when he asserts the benevolence of the Deity as a fact to be proved by an appeal to the phenomena of nature, we can only say that he is, in this instance, prepared to receive evidence far less strong than any portion of that aggregate of evidence which, when brought forward in behalf of revelation, he rejects as insufficient. If indeed there were no other reasons to convince us of our need of a revelation, I should conceive this to be of itself sufficient, namely, that we want it to give us a full assurance, to produce in our minds a thorough conviction that the tremendous Being, whose power is irresistible, is all-merciful, as well as almighty. That God is love, is the sentence written in every page of the Bible, inscribed on every fact which the

<sup>1</sup> Paley's general argument, however, seems to make God an imperfect *τεχνίτης καὶ δημούργος*.

light of revelation enables us to interpret, and evinced preeminently and most gloriously, in that while we were yet sinners, *he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Admit this as a revealed fact, and then the arguments of philosophy are not to be withheld: *then* we can understand that it is not incompatible with divine benevolence to place certain of his creatures in a state of trial, while a state of trial presumes the possibility of evil; *then* we can hear with patience the argument, that if the operations of nature are directed by general laws, what is good on the whole may be seemingly productive of evil to the individual; that, without *suffering*, or at least the *risk of suffering*, there could be no room for prudence on the one hand or humanity on the other; that if there were no pain, there could be no pity, without pity no benevolence, without benevolence no virtue. All these and such like arguments it is most useful to dwell upon, when the mind can ever fall back with faith on the great foundation which has been revealed, that God is love.

But why, if such be the case, are men so unwilling to have recourse to revelation on a point where reason is so manifestly insufficient? I believe the answer to be simply this,—that the

mercy of God, as revealed in Scripture, is very far different from that which the pride of an un-renewed heart is willing to admit. Man wishes to persuade himself that the divine benevolence is such that the Deity cannot punish the creature for obeying the impulses of the nature he has received; that, in a word, having placed men in the world as they are, he will permit them to do as they will, so long as they do not directly injure each other. How very different is the doctrine of the Scriptures! how very different the position they take! They declare, that although the Lord, the Lord God be merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, and forgiving, for the merits of Christ, iniquity, transgression, and sin upon repentance, yet he will by no means clear the impenitent, that there shall be no peace for the wicked,—that although God be love itself to those who are in the narrow path, yet to all who are in the broad way he is a consuming fire, a mighty, a terrible God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall.

But passing on to another class of persons, we find many, who accede to the truth of what has just been stated, who acknowledge that there is a way that leadeth to destruction, but yet with self-satisfied complacency, while walking in

the imaginations of their own hearts, would fain persuade themselves that their way, however broad, is sufficiently narrow, and their gate, however wide, sufficiently strait. Such persons attend the services of the church: but when? when such attendance happens not to be inconvenient, that is, they give to the world their first thoughts, and the world's leavings they carelessly throw to their God. They give alms of their goods to feed the poor,—but does their donation to the subscription list ever cause the sacrifice of a single gewgaw, ever put them to personal inconvenience? They are perhaps amiable in their families and courteous in their behaviour to all men,—but why? If we find that there are other virtues which they are accustomed to neglect, we may attribute their performance of these, not to principle, but to the circumstance that they are by nature inclined to them,—that in the exercise of them there is no difficulty, no straitness of path. From sensibility of constitution they may be often kindled into emotion by the affecting facts attending our redemption,—and yet their affections (not leading them to acts of beneficence) may only degenerate into a mere maudlin sentimentality, instead of giving movement and animation to an abiding principle. If we, my brethren, wish to know whether we

be of the number of these self-deceivers, let us ask our hearts whether, when our religious duties, and our worldly interests, or worldly pleasures, or worldly passions clash, as clash they sometimes must, or there would be no trial in the case, we yield our allegiance to mammon or to God? Like the young man in the Gospel, we may flatter ourselves that we are keeping all the commandments of God, all the while that we are cherishing some little bosom sin which we are willing to spare, as Saul spared Agag. Suppose that the Lord Jesus were to say to any one of us as he did to him, *Go, and sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me*,—how should we act,—should we obey, or should we, like the young man, go away sorrowful? This may be an extreme case,—the like is not demanded of us all; though we live in an age when we must feel that, by an afflictive dispensation of Providence, that is, in other words, by the call of God, those who have now great possessions may live to hear such a command virtually given,—may live to find it demanded of them to sacrifice all that is dear in life and life itself for the sake of God, of Christ, and of the blessed church. But not to dwell upon this,—one thing must be abundantly clear, that we cannot be walking in the narrow path unless

we find that path to be narrow to us, and that it cannot be narrow to us unless it be sometimes irksome, difficult, unpleasant. If our religion lays us under no restraints, it cannot be the religion of Jesus Christ.

Unwelcome news is this to a wilful and a careless world, which is always desirous of hearing us speak peace, though there is no peace. The object with most men, aye with men too, thinking themselves religious, is to get to heaven, with as little of sacrifice, of self-denial, and self-control as possible; hence they are the ready victims of self-deceit: they wish to deceive, not to enlighten their conscience; and hence, without denying the distinctions between right and wrong, they endeavour to confound them; and, when they are determined to do what is evil, they seek, like Ahab, a false prophet who may call evil good and good evil; when they nauseate wholesome viands, they seek a caterer who can put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter; when they hate the light, they look out for some man of sin who may put light for darkness and darkness for light.

And this it is,—this fatal proneness of our nature to self-deception, this readiness to be deceived, this desire to exaggerate, to elevate our natural dispositions, when amiable, into virtues,

and to make our besetting sins appear to be no sins at all,—this it is, this wish to have it proved to us that the broad way is the narrow path, that gives rise to sectarianism and to infidelity under the specious name of Deism.

When sectarianism prevails, as it does in this country, every man may act, not according to God's law, but according to his own will, without compunction of conscience. Is your disposition sceptical? Behold a sect prepared with learned arguments to shew that, in spite of the Bible, it is possible without faith to please God. Or are you easy of belief, inclined to superstition? You will not have far to go, in order to discover, in defiance of St. James, that faith without works may live. Does a malignant disposition incline you to speak evil of dignities, and to indulge in variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions? There is scarcely a sect in existence which does not by its example shew that, maugre the Apostle, these tempers are not inconsistent with a profession of godliness. And passing by an almost imperceptible gradation from sect to sect, until revelation be wholly discarded, the profligate himself need not despair. For there be ravening wolves in sheep's clothing,—there be sensualists calling themselves philosophers and philanthropists, who (prowling

about our streets) contend that to represent soberness, temperance and chastity as virtues is mere priestcraft, since the Maker of man would never have given him his appetites unless they were to be pampered and indulged.

And thus it has always been. On this account it was that the heathens actually deified their worst and vilest passions; and to this infirmity of our nature, to this desire of forming a communion between light and darkness, of making concord between Christ and Belial, may be traced all the motley schools of heresy and schism, which from the first have disturbed the peace of the church, and brought discredit on the Christian name. No sooner did the church exhibit itself to the world as an influential society, than the philosophers of the East were struck with the wisdom of its doctrines, and astounded by the miracles of its professors. But what! were the wise men of the East to confess that they and their predecessors had actually failed in the acquisition of that knowledge, of which they had hitherto boasted the exclusive possession? No. To do this requires a degree of moral courage and a love of truth, which is possessed by few, and for the want of which, it is to be feared, *not* a few perish. What, then, was to be done? Conciliation and concession

were appealed to, and thus the Eastern philosophy was to be blended with the religion of the Lord Jesus,—so that the blessings of the latter might be secured, without the loss of worldly interest, ease, or character—that is to say, that the new converts might walk, at the same time, in the broad way and in the narrow path. Hence the Gnostic and Manichæan heresies.

What the Gnostics did for the philosophy of the East, the Eclectics attempted for the Greeks. Pretending to select what was good from every school of philosophy, (reckoning the Christian church as one such school,) they sought in the true spirit of liberalism to amalgamate all the various and contradictory doctrines of every system, and thus to enable heathens to be heathens still, and yet to be entitled, without any sacrifice, to all the benefits of the Christian covenant; that is to say, to walk in the broad way, and yet, nevertheless, to imagine themselves in the narrow path. And by a learned member of this University, the origin of the Arian faction in the fourth century has been traced up to the same principle<sup>2</sup>. They wished to share in the honours with which the emperor had adorned the sanc-

<sup>2</sup> See Mr. Newman's invaluable History of Arianism.

tuary, without renouncing the unclean thing, or coming out of the heathen world. Hence their laxity of morals in order to reconcile the courtier, their heresy in doctrine in order to conciliate the philosopher,—to conciliate him towards a religion which is as uncompromising in its principles as it is benevolent in its object. It is indeed remarkable that the purpose of Arianism was at its very commencement discovered and exposed by its first opponent, Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, who in his circular letter charges the heresiarch and his followers with an endeavour to blend falsehood with truth, impiety with religion.

To what again but to this propensity of our nature leading us to confound our wishes with our duty, and to delight in the sophistry which would teach that we may do as we will here, and still be safe hereafter,—to what but this are we to attribute the popularity of mahometanism in the East, and of popery in the West? The religion of sensuality which represents heaven as the seat only of a more refined debauchery than that which degrades man to the condition of a brute beast on earth, must ever be dear to the voluptuary of Asia. And the popish system will never want its advocates while, with the wisdom of those who are wiser in their generation than

the children of light, it accommodates itself to all sorts of men, while for the idle as well as the studious it opens the cloister, while for the superstitious it prepares its relics and its charms, while it can enlist the active and ambitious under the banners of Loyola, while the imaginative can enjoy the pomp and circumstance of an imposing ritual, while the austere can be led to feel that his austerities are meritorious, while the profligate and the worldling can run a career of indolence, dissipation, avarice, dishonesty, and vice, and yet be safe on the payment of a paltry penance,—a fast, a pater-noster—a charitable dole given grudgingly and of necessity—while it thus becomes all things to all men, seeking, not to convert souls, but to count professors. Admirable is this system, second only to the system of infidel liberalism for blinding the eyes and deadening the consciences of men while walking in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Genuine Christianity must always remain as it has always been, an object of detestation to all but the sincerely pious, because it makes no allowances, admits of no subterfuges, but wages an everlasting war as against all sin and wickedness, so especially against *that* sin which each man is most anxious to have overlooked—his besetting sin.

Thus (amid all the mutabilities of heretical doctrine) we observe the opposite means universally pointing to the same end, and that end is to prove that men may continue in sin and yet grace abound. To this fact, no doubt it was that, with prophetic eye, our Lord referred, when immediately after exhorting his followers to walk in the narrow path, he adds, *Beware of false prophets. They will come to you, in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Da men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits shall ye know them.*

Now by a prophet in this passage, it is admitted by every one, that not one who delivers, but one who interprets, the divine oracles, is intended. But most of the commentators appear to consider our Lord as alluding to ordinary teachers. Yet this can hardly be the case, because to them the criterion proposed cannot be applied; since it is clearly *not* from the influence of his doctrine upon his own conduct that we

can judge of the truth of what a teacher says. It is obvious that a man may be a very moral man in his conduct, (such are often the preachers of Socinianism,) and yet teach doctrines the most erroneous, while the doctrine may be sound which is taught by a bad man,—a man, for instance, who should read from the pulpit the discourses of our old divines. When the Scribes and Pharisees, sitting in Moses' seat, taught what the law prescribed, their own non-observance of the law did not vitiate their teaching. This we know from the very highest authority. If, then, a moral man, a man amiable in all the relations of life, may teach, as is obviously the fact, unsound doctrine, and an immoral man may teach sound doctrine, it is not by a teacher's conduct that we are to judge of his precepts. Were this, indeed, the case, what protection should we have from the hypocrite? How, indeed, could this be the criterion, unless we were able to search men's hearts? We are not, then, to reason, as weak persons do, so and so is so bad a man that I am sure what he preaches cannot be true, or so and so is so good a man that I am sure what he says cannot be false. No. This would be to call men Rabbi and Master in the very sense that is condemned,—with respect to our teachers, our business is simply to ascertain from Scripture

and the church whether what they deliver for doctrine accords with what has been revealed to us by him who is our only Master, even Christ.

But if we consider our Lord in this passage to refer, not to ordinary teachers, but to those who establish systems or sects for the purpose of confounding the right path with the wrong,—not to heretics but to heresiarchs,—then all will be easy and plain. By the fruits of these false prophets, as exhibited not in their lives but in their systems, we shall know them. If the system, though *seemingly* based on Scripture, (as, for instance, that of the antinomians,) evidently, however indirectly, tends to the neglect of moral virtue; by that very fact we may know that the founders and expounders of that system were and are false prophets, howsoever pious their demeanor, howsoever upright their conduct, howsoever skilfully they may have been clothed in sheep's clothing. If the system, on the other hand, however apparently friendly to morals, lead to the virtual denial of the fundamental verities of revelation, (as, for instance, that of the Socinians,) we may be sure that fruit *really* good cannot be produced by what may be compared to the thorn-tree or the thistle,—by a sect which would establish works without faith, and persuade men that without a new heart and a right

spirit, or rather with a heart and spirit merely controlled by worldly proprieties, they can even *merit* that heaven, to obtain which, even for the least unworthy of human beings, the Christian believes that it was necessary that the Son of God should assume our nature, and lead a life of obedience, and die a death of torture. . Or if the system, however apparently conformable to reason, however logically maintained, and however supported by arguments miscalled metaphysical, as, for instance, that of the utilitarian, lead to consequences the most detestable ; (for example, to the justification, or at least the palliation, under certain circumstances, of infanticide<sup>s</sup>;)—this at once should persuade us, that all the reasoning, and all the argument, notwithstanding its plausibility, and in other respects its specious humanity, is not to weigh with us for a moment.

Such are the false prophets ;—prophets who seek popularity by blinding the eyes and silencing the misgivings of those who are walking in the broad way of their besetting sins ; false prophets, of whom our Saviour bids us beware. Generally the originators of these systems are clothed in sheep's clothing ; they come to us as

<sup>s</sup> Principes du Code Pénal de Bentham. Trad. par Dumont, chap. xii.

angels of light. The Gnostic teachers were, according to the popular feeling of their age, abstemious and austere; and Arius, that arch-heretic, is described as a man of engaging manners and fascinating address. It *must* be so. The heresiarch must be amiable, specious, and clever. If it were not so, how could he persuade men to receive him as a teacher?—how attach them to his person?

But if what has now been advanced be true, if what gives boldness and success to false prophets, be the willingness of our hearts to be deceived when any duty may occur to which those hearts are disinclined;—as against all other false prophets, so especially against the traitor within, who would betray us to the enemy without,—it becomes us to watch. And we can do this effectually only by being on our guard against that which is more or less the besetting sin of all, (though evincing itself in ways the most contrary)—self-indulgence. Yes, against self-indulgence, both in the formation of our principles, and the regulation of our conduct, we ought indeed most sedulously to watch. I speak advisedly and pointedly when I thus refer to the sin of self-indulgence in the formation of our principles, for I verily believe that much self-deception exists on this point, and that it is

from the want of due care in this respect that schism and latitudinarianism, if not heresy, is so rife in the land. However circumspect young men may be in taking proper precautions for the regulation of their conduct when they set out in life, it would seem as if it were taken for granted that the way to right opinions were any thing but narrow, the gate to sound principles of most easy access. It is lamentable to see how hastily opinions are—not formed—but imbibed, and we all know the haughtiness of human pride too well to be surprised at finding how, when once acted upon, such opinions are pertinaciously maintained. That men do not think their sloth sinful, when truth is the object of their pursuit, is evident from the multitude of little tracts and pamphlets, in which it is to be feared too often the pastor as well as the flock finds his instruction. However indefatigable as a student a man may have been at the University, how often do we find him, when preparing for holy orders, resorting to those easy helps, which, in the study of the classics, because leading only to superficial acquirement, he would have despised. Instead of drinking deeply at the original cisterns; instead of preparing, by the study of the history, the doctrines, the discipline of the primitive church and the early

Fathers, to become a governor, (as to a certain extent every presbyter is,) of the modern church, how many there are who content themselves with drinking at the muddy fountain of some tract society, to which they have been recommended by chance, and where perhaps the latitudinarian dissenter lays the first foundation of the divinity of him who is henceforth to become a churchman, it may be, but a churchman of most unstable principles. The greater caution is necessary on this point, since it has always been one of the objects of the heretic to win proselytes by a professed simplification of the truth. To the student perplexed by the doctrine of the Trinity, the Sabellian steps in, by easy and plausible arguments to render intelligible that which from the very nature of the subject must be incomprehensible. Here some minds take their stand; but if satisfaction be not afforded, as the Sabellian simplifies on the church, so the Arian simplifies on the Sabellian, while the Socinian is more simple still, and Socinianism soon merges into that which, to the careless thinker, is the most simple form of all, pure Deism. All this progress of error is the result of that false principle with which so many men start,—the desire of saving themselves trouble, of making their way broad.

With respect to our conduct we shall (if we are wise) accustom ourselves to examine each day how far our religion has led to the sacrifice of worldly comfort, or ease, or time, or interest. Each night, ere we kneel down to pray for God's protecting providence or sanctifying grace, let us ask our hearts, not only *whether* we have this day been treading the narrow path, but *how?* What worldly interest have we renounced to perform some religious duty? In what instance have I checked my temper, or controlled a passion, for the love of God and of his Christ? In short, *what* have I done of self-denial, exertion, or mortification?—let the specific act or acts be daily adduced; for if we come not to details, the conscience itself may become a false prophet. Even in the most retired life, and when least exposed to temptation, no day ought to be permitted to pass, without our examining ourselves on the virtue of self-denial, not a day should pass without our submitting to some privation. As we perform certain actions with no other view but to exercise the body, so ought we to accustom ourselves to daily acts of self-denial, if it be merely to keep our spiritual energies in exercise. It was on this principle that the retired scholars in the primitive ages were accustomed so rigidly to fast; they fasted, not only

to keep the body under, and to bring it into subjection, but also for the sake of self-discipline. It is only by frequent acts that a habit can be formed. And if we wait for great occasions to discharge the duty of self-denial, self-discipline, and self-control, because the occasions will be few, the virtues cannot become habitual, and *not* being habitually virtuous when the time of trial and temptation arrives, great will be our fall. The wise man will never despise the day of small things,—and while we censure the Papist for regarding his mortifications as meritorious acts, we ought to shew him that our opposition does not result from any desire to pamper our appetites, by having ourselves recourse to mortification, as a help to devotion and virtue.

I cannot conclude without observing, how clearly what has now been said exposes the sophistry by which those deceive themselves, who, walking at this present time in the broad way; by their own confession, nevertheless have determined, at some future period, to tread the narrow path. My brethren, are there not some such here assembled? And if there be, I implore their attention to what is now said. I will not point out to them the folly of deferring till a future time what can best be done at the present moment; I will not dwell on the uncer-

tainty of human life, or on the fact, the most awful fact, that the impenitence which is now wilful may hereafter become judicial ; I will simply ask you, *why* you delay ? You delay in the vain, vain hope, that the narrow path may at some future period become the broad way ; that is to say, that the time will come when you may walk in the way of godliness without self-denial. Oh, vain hope ! Oh, most destructive sophistry ! If there shall be no sacrifice, no mortification of the flesh, and of the spirit, and of the intellect ; no renunciation of self and selfish passion and pride, how will the way be narrow ? But, if these sacrifices are necessary, will they be more easily made when the habit of evil is formed ? When the conscience has become hardened ? When the moral discernment, by making frequent excuses, is perverted ? When the sensibility of conscience is benumbed ? When a continual apostasy to vice has rendered your aspirations after virtue less ardent ? No, brethren, No. Depend upon it, instead of becoming broader, the path of godliness and virtue becomes day by day, to those who neglect to tread it, more narrow and more strait, more hedged up with thorns and briars, more difficult of access ; and well will it be for those who harden their hearts and close their ears to the

frequent admonitions and calls of the Holy Ghost, if they find not the barrier at length impassable. *Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Work while it is called to-day, for the hour cometh when no man can work.*

But however difficult it may be to tread the way of righteousness, however narrow the path, it is nevertheless a way of pleasantness, surrounded by an atmosphere of serenity and peace. Our God is there, and, where He is, the wilderness becomes like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord. There and there only can true happiness be found, if happiness consist, as undoubtedly it does, in that sunshine of the heart, which results from a conscience at peace with its Maker. Illusory and vain are all the joys of those who have forsaken the paths of uprightness, and walk in the ways of darkness ; unsubstantial every flower they gather, their industry but laborious impotence ; their drink is mingled with gall, and at the end they will find that they have been eating ashes instead of bread ; not exempt from disease, and disappointment, and reproach, and wasting, and destruction, and death, to *them* there is no staff on which to lean for support, no well-spring of liv-

ing water to refresh them : to them their miseries are intolerable, since to the true Christian and to him only is known the moral alchemy by which afflictions can be converted into blessings ; he, and he only, has that new heart and new spirit which can regard things temporal in their just proportion, since (by the supernatural operations of the Holy Ghost) from the eye of his mind the film has been removed, and, at the end of the most darksome vista, he can catch a glimpse of things eternal, and behold Jesus, his Saviour, standing at the right hand of God.—What to others are the damps of disease, to him are the dews of heaven ; what to others a pestilent vapour, to him are fragrance and balm ; what to others a cloud of darkness, to him a pillar of light. Inhaling airs odorous of heaven, and strong in the might of the Lord, he marches boldly on his onward course. He has God for his protector, Christ for his advocate, the Holy Ghost for his Comforter ;—and therefore, though passing through the valley of the shadow of death, he fears no evil ;—yea, when others die, he only falls asleep in Jesus, to awake up after the likeness of his resurrection.



## A P P E N D I X.

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ALTHOUGH the *Origines Ecclesiastice* of the learned Joseph Bingham be a work frequently referred to as a Dictionary, it is to be feared that it is not so often perused as it deserves to be, as an introduction to ecclesiastical history; the writer may, therefore, be pardoned for the following rather long quotation, "which doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times," and which may serve as an appendix to Sermon II.

"As the primitive Christians were eminent for their candour and prudence in composing unnecessary and verbal disputes; so, where the cause was weighty and any material points of religion concerned, they were no less famous for their zeal and courage in standing up, in the defence of truth, against all opposers. It was neither the artifice and subtlety, nor the power and malice of their enemies would make them yield, where they thought the faith was in danger to be destroyed. In other cases, says Nazianzen, there is nothing so peaceable, so moderate as Christian bishops; but in this case, they cannot bear the name of moderation, to betray their God by silence and sitting still; but here they are exceeding eager warriors, and fight-

ing champions that are not to be overcome. He does not mean that the weapons of their warfare were carnal; that they used any pious frauds, or plotted treasons or rebellions; or took up arms in defence of religion; but that with an undaunted courage and brave resolution, they stood up firm in defence of the truth; and it mattered not what names they were called by, (contentious, unpeaceable, immoderate, factious, turbulent, incendiaries, or any thing of the like nature,) nor yet what they suffered in any kind, whilst they contended for that faith which was once delivered to the saints. Church history abounds with instances of this nature; but it will be sufficient to exemplify the practice of this virtue in a single instance, which Gregory Nazianzen gives in the Life of St. Basil, where he relates a famous dialogue that passed between Modestus the Arian governor, under Valens, and that holy man. Modestus tried all arts to bring him over to the party, but finding all in vain, he at last threatened him with severity. What, said he, dost thou not fear this power which I am armed with? Why should I fear? said Basil; What canst thou do, or what can I suffer? What canst thou suffer? said the other; many things that are in my power: confiscation of thy goods, banishment, torment, and death. But thou must threaten me with something else, said Basil, if thou canst, for none of these things can touch me. As for confiscation of goods, I am not liable to it, for I have nothing to lose, unless thou wantest these tattered and

thread-bare garments, and a few books, which is all the estate I am possessed of. For banishment, I know not what it means, for I am tied to no place; I shall esteem every country as much my own, as that where I now dwell; for the whole earth is the LORD's, and I am only a pilgrim and a stranger in it. As for torments, what can they do to him, who has not a body, that can hold out beyond the first stroke? And as for death, it will be a kindness to me, for it will but so much the sooner send me unto GOD, to whom I live, and do the duty of my station; being in a great measure already dead, and now of a long time hastening unto him. The governor was strangely surprised at this discourse, and said, No man ever talked at this free and bold rate to Modestus before. Perhaps, said Basil, thou didst never meet with a bishop before; for if thou hadst, he would have talked just as I do, when he was put to contend about such matters as these. In other things we are mild and yielding, and the humblest men on earth, as our laws oblige us to be; we are so far from shewing ourselves supercilious or haughty to magistrates in power, that we do not do it to persons of the meanest rank and condition. But when the cause of GOD is concerned or in danger, then indeed we esteem all other things as nothing, and fix our eyes only upon him. Then fire and sword, wild beasts, and instruments of torture to tear off our flesh, are so far from being a terror, that they are rather a pleasure and recreation to us. Therefore

reproach and threaten us, do your pleasure, use your power to the utmost, and let the emperor know all this; yet you shall never conquer us, or bring us to assent to your impious doctrine, though you threaten us ten thousand times more than all this. The governor, hearing this, and finding him to be a man of invincible and inflexible courage, dismissed him now, not with threatenings, but with a sort of reverence and submission, and went and told the emperor, that the bishop of that church was too hard for them all; for his courage was so great, his resolution so firm, that neither promises nor threatening could move him from his purpose. Nor was it only open violence they thus bravely resisted, but also the more crafty attempts of the enemies of truth, who many times went artificially to work against it; partly by blackening the character of its champions and defenders, and representing them as base and intolerable men; and partly by smoothing their own character, and pretending unity in faith with the orthodox, and that their designs were only designs of peace, to remove unscriptural words and novel terms out of the way, that all men might be of the same opinions.

" The other artifices which I said the Arians used to destroy the faith, was the specious pretence of peace and unity. The politic and crafty men among them, in the time of Constantine, pretended that they had no quarrel with the catholic doctrine of the Trinity itself, but only were aggrieved at the novel

and unscriptural words, such as *όμοούσιον*, consubstantial, &c., which the Council of Nice had used to express it by. These they said were dividing terms, and the cause of all the quarrels and combustion; and therefore they still urged the removing these terms, as the great stumbling-block, out of the way, that the peace and unity of the church might follow upon it. But Athanasius and other wise catholics easily perceived whither this sly stratagem tended; being very sensible that their design was not against the bare terms, but the truth itself, and therefore they always stoutly and zealously opposed it. Nor could the Arians ever gain this point upon the catholics, till at last in the council of Ariminum, AN. 359, by great importunity and clamour for unity and peace, they were prevailed upon to sink the word consubstantial, and draw up a new creed without it, yet as they thought containing the very same doctrine, and in as full terms as could be expressed, save that the word consubstantial was not in it. But here it must be owned, these catholic bishops were wanting in their zeal, as they themselves were quickly after convinced. For no sooner was their concession made, but the Arians immediately gave out, and boasted over all the world, that the Nicene faith was condemned, and Arianism established in a general council, though nothing was less intended by the catholic bishops, who were present at it. But now they were sensible they had made a false step, by suffering themselves thus to be im-

posed upon by designing men. They now saw that they ought to have stuck to the Nicene terms as well as the faith, since the faith itself so much depended on them. They now began to complain of the fraud, and asked pardon of their brethren for their want of foresight and caution in a case so tender and material. St. Jerome, who gives us this account of the whole transaction, from the acts of the synod and other records extant in his time, brings them in making this apology for themselves. "The bishops," says he, "who had been imposed upon by fraud at Ariminum, and who were reputed heretics without being conscious to themselves of any heresy, went about everywhere, protesting by the body of Christ, and all that is sacred in the church, that they suspected no evil in their creed. They thought the sense had agreed with the words, and that men had not meant one thing in their hearts, and uttered another thing with their lips. They were deceived by entertaining too good an opinion of base and evil men. They did not suppose the priests of Christ could so treacherously have fought against Christ. In short, they lamented their mistake now with tears, and offered to condemn as well their own subscription as all the Arian blasphemies. Any one that reads St. Jerome carefully will easily perceive that these bishops were no Arians, nor ever intended to subscribe an Arian creed; but their fault was want of zeal in parting with the Nicene Creed to take another instead of it, with-

out the word consubstantial, which though they subscribed, in the simplicity of their hearts, as an orthodox creed, (and indeed the words, as Jerome describes them, in their plain sense are sound and orthodox, as St. Jerome says in their excuse,) yet the Arians put an equivocal and poisonous sense upon them, giving out, after the council was ended, that they had not only abolished the word consubstantial, but with it condemned the Nicene faith also; which was strange, surprising news to the bishops who had been at Ariminum. Then, says St. Jerome, “*Ingemuit totus orbis, et Arianum se esse miratus est.*” The whole world groaned and was amazed to think that she should be reputed Arian. That is, the catholic bishops of the whole world (for there were three hundred of them present at that council) were amazed to find themselves so abused, and represented as Arians, when they never intended in the least to confirm the Arian doctrine. But now, by this the reader will be able to judge what kind of zeal the catholic church required then in her clergy, viz. That they should not only contend for the faith itself, but also for those catholic forms and ways of expressing it, which had been composed and settled in general councils, as a barrier against heretics, the giving up of which to subtle and dangerous adversaries would always give them advantage to make fiercer attacks upon the faith itself, and prove destructive to the catholic cause; as those bishops found, by woeful experience, who were concerned in the concession made

at Ariminum. 'Tis candour, indeed, when good catholics are divided only about words, to bring them to a right understanding of one another, which will set them at peace and unity again; but 'tis tameness to give the main bulwarks of the faith to fallacious adversaries and designing men, whose arts and aims, however disguised, are always known to strike at the foundation of religion. And therefore, though no man was ever more candid than Athanasius towards mistaken catholics, yet neither was any more zealous in opposing the arts and stratagems of the Arian party; always sticking close to the definition of the Nicene council, and never yielding that any tittle or syllable of that creed should be erased or altered." Book vi. c. 3.

THE END.

